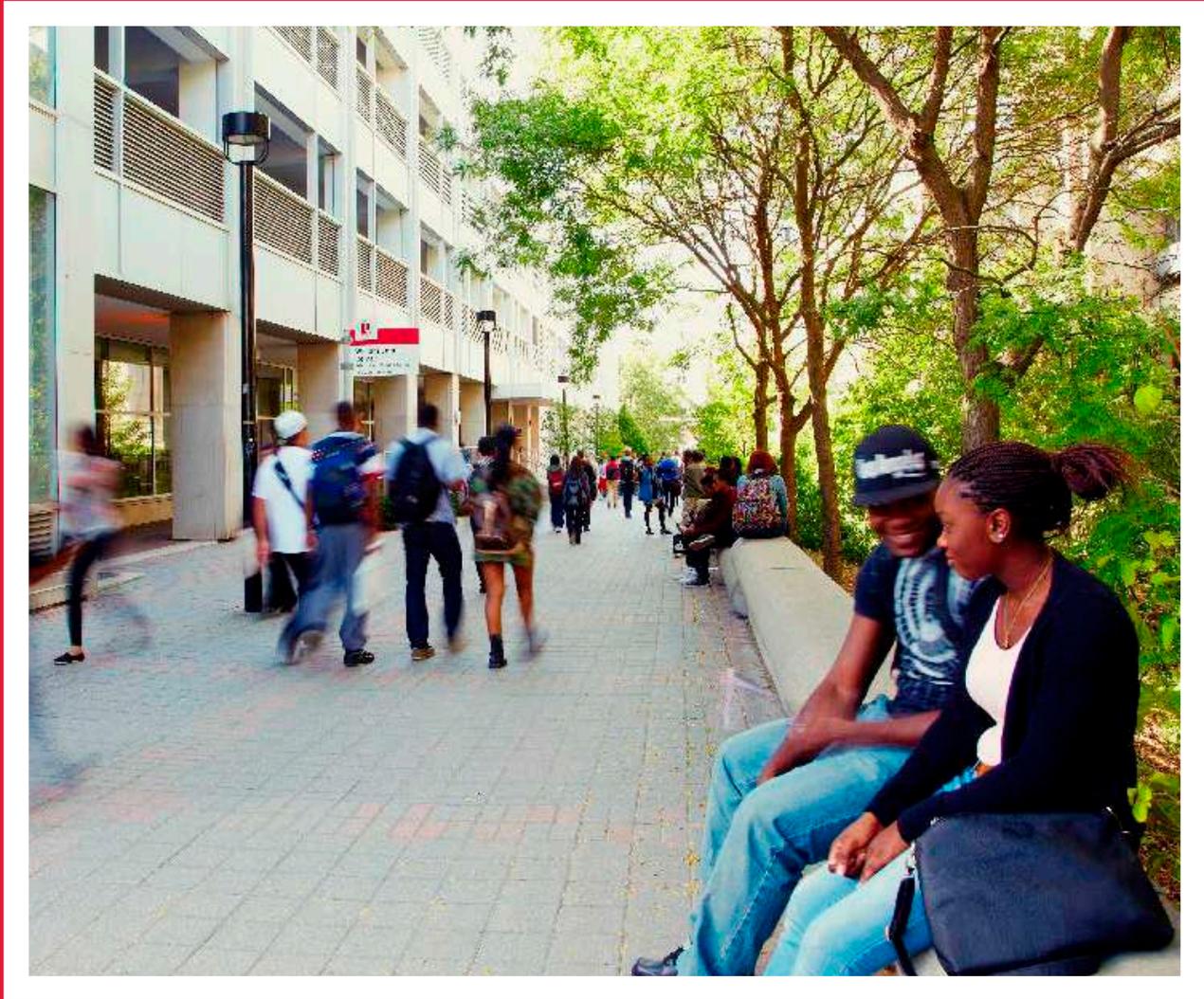


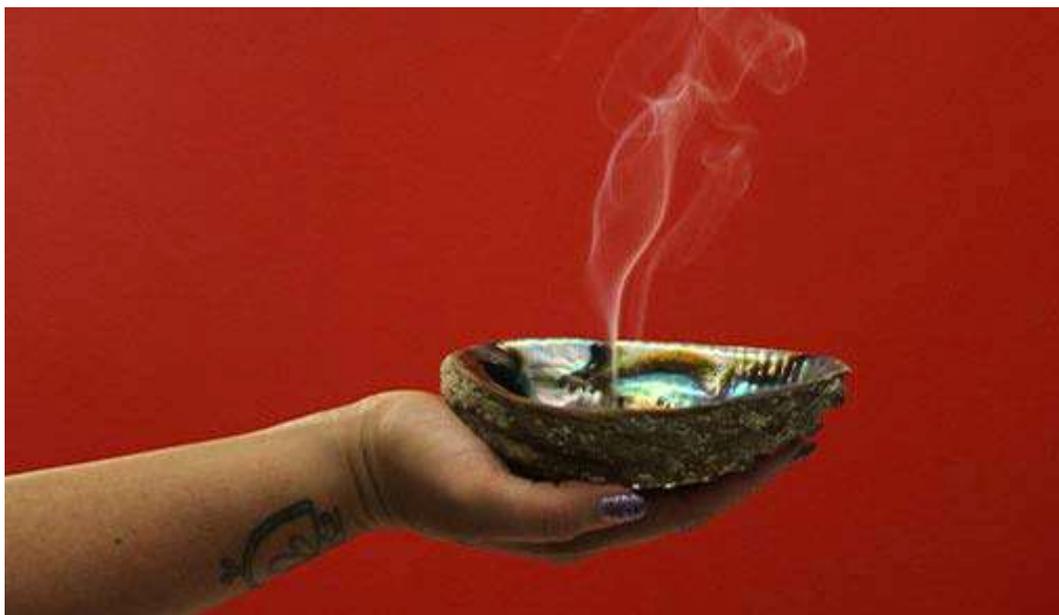
# LIVING WELL TOGETHER



## York University

Keele Campus Vision and Strategy

November 2021



## **YORK UNIVERSITY LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document, *Living Well Together*, was developed under the leadership of York University President and Vice-Chancellor Rhonda L. Lenton and Vice-President Finance and Administration Carol McAulay.

Living Well Together: *Mino Bimaaddiziwin* is one of the six priorities for action in the York University Academic Plan. As noted in the UAP, Anishinaabe teachings refer to the gift of *Mino Bimaaddiziwin* or the Good Life. Given the scale and breadth of York University, we must make a conscious effort to know each other and to build a community reflective of this Good Life.

Special thanks are due to York University faculty, instructors, staff members, and students, as well as the members of our surrounding communities, who engaged and provided their thoughts and ideas for this Vision and Strategy, despite the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 70 consultation engagements and working sessions were conducted in seeking input to this work.

The plan also benefited from ongoing input provided by members of the Land and Property Committee of the York University Board of Governors, and by all members of the Board during their May 2019 and May 2021 Board Retreat sessions.

Building on this foundation, *Living Well Together* now represents the starting point for what is planned as a concerted and continuous process of consultation with the full range of communities and stakeholders as we anticipate the implementation of this campus Vision and Strategy. Sustained engagement will be essential to the successful refining of our vision and the goals we hope to achieve.

The development of this document was supported by the York University Development Corporation, with a team that included members from the Planning, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture Studio at DIALOG, from the Transaction Real Estate Group at Ernst and Young, and from Urban Land Advisors, Inc.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last year, York University published its first ever *Economic and Social Impact Report* (April 8, 2020), documenting the ways in which we act as an anchor institution in the GTHA, driving positive change in our local and global communities. Key findings show that we act: as a ladder of opportunity committed to ensuring that no talent is left behind; as an engine for social progress collaborating in ways that foster inclusive, sustainable, and resilient communities; and, as a driver of economic growth advancing research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. In brief, the Report reflects and reinforces our identity as a community-engaged and progressive university – change-makers coming together to enhance the well-being of the communities we serve.

Our University Academic Plan 2020-2025 calls on us to further strengthen our impact in six priority areas in order to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals articulated by the United Nations to protect the planet, end poverty, and ensure prosperity for all. Given our mission of education, research, and community engagement, universities are well-positioned to cultivate the cross-sector collaboration with the greatest potential for addressing these complex, global issues.

With the Coronavirus pandemic now in its fourth wave, there is a new sense of urgency about the future and how we might best utilize the resources we have to strengthen the student learning experience, support new programs in emerging areas of need, intensify research, entrepreneurship, and incubation, and enhance Mino Bimaaddiziwin, a Good Life for everyone. Improving the function and capacity of the Keele Campus has the potential to enhance our efforts while also meeting community needs.

How we think about the land has shifted enormously throughout the consultations over these past 18 months due in no small measure to the thoughtful contributions received. It is fair to say that world events have also influenced our thinking regarding sustainability, equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation. It is an important reminder that we will need to continue to consult as we move forward with implementation and be open to the need for revisions as circumstances change. But I look forward to the significant opportunity we have before us to strengthen our engagement with our community for the benefit of all.

One final word is in order. While this particular initiative is focussed on the Keele Campus Vision and Strategy, it is important to note that it is part of a larger approach to planning for all our campuses and to opportunities that may arise for strengthening our impact as a University.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rhonda L. Lenton'.

**Rhonda L. Lenton**, PhD  
President & Vice-Chancellor  
York University



VAUGHAN  
METROPOLITAN  
CENTRE STATION

HWY 407

HIGHWAY 407  
STATION

STEELES AVE. W.

PIONEER  
VILLAGE  
STATION

YORK  
UNIVERSITY  
STATION

JANE ST.

KEELE ST.

JANE & FINCH  
STATION

DRIFTWOOD  
STATION

TOBERMORY  
STATION

SENTINEL  
STATION

FINCH WEST  
STATION

FINCH AVE. W.

DOWNSVIEW PARK  
STATION

# A VISION FOR KEELE CAMPUS

For six decades, York University has been tugging at Toronto's centre of gravity, drawing the city north. The Keele Campus, built on what was then the city's northern outskirts, is now a daily destination for close to 60,000 students, faculty, instructors, staff, and visitors. The third-largest university in Canada, York has become a creative and economic engine for the city and the region – and it is on the threshold of an even greater transformation.

Recognizing York University's high-energy draw, the City of Toronto, the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada partnered to extend the Yonge-University subway line into the heart of the Keele Campus. This investment has turned a former suburban campus into one of the most accessible and desirable locations in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), setting the stage for an era of change.

There is, now, an unprecedented opportunity to advance the university's teaching and research mission, while enhancing the function and capacity of the campus, improving the quality of life for students, staff, faculty, instructors, and visitors, and meeting a host of economic, social, and sustainability goals for the larger community. It is imperative that York University rise to this challenge. Accordingly, York University has created this document:

- to set out the Vision and Strategy that will turn Keele Campus into an even more vibrant university community;
- to make the university's goals and intentions clear for all those who will partner with us in the coming decades; and
- to provide the basis for consultation to further refine and implement the strategy.

## A Campus Vision: Living Well Together

York University's Keele Campus is where university and city, academia and industry, people and culture meet and thrive. That energy will soon extend from Keele's historic academic core into four new neighbourhoods, nurturing a dynamic, flourishing, and complete community, and modeling the university's best and most innovative thinking. The results will demonstrate York's commitment to community well-being and environmental stewardship – to **Living Well Together**.



## UNIVERSITY MISSION

The purpose of this Vision and Strategy is to improve the function and capacity of the university in support of the three components of its mission: teaching and learning, research and innovation, and service to the community. York seeks to provide a broad sociodemographic of students with access to a high-quality education at a research-intensive university that is committed to enhancing the well-being of the communities we serve. As a complex land- and community-development strategy, some elements of this plan may not always appear to have obvious academic or research applications. Nevertheless, whether the proposals cover classrooms and research labs, or community-building features such as daycares, grocery stores, and housing, every element of this initiative will be considered for its contribution to advancing York University's core mission.

Post-secondary institutions are increasingly recognized as social infrastructure, with both physical and virtual components that support a resilient, just, equitable, and sustainable society. Universities educate for individual and collective capacity; their researchers expand knowledge and answer society's most pressing social, economic, and environmental questions. Institutions can pursue those mission goals in a way that is insular and self-limiting or expansive, maximizing complementary societal benefit. York University has a record for reaching out: for example, its Social Procurement strategy leverages the buying of goods and services to reduce poverty, promote economic and social inclusion, and support local economic development and social enterprise.

This Vision and Strategy further explores York's opportunities to use its resources for community and social benefit. It lays out a plan to build the things and the programs that York needs in a way that most enhances the lives and capacities of those around us. Everyone can benefit – and everyone should.





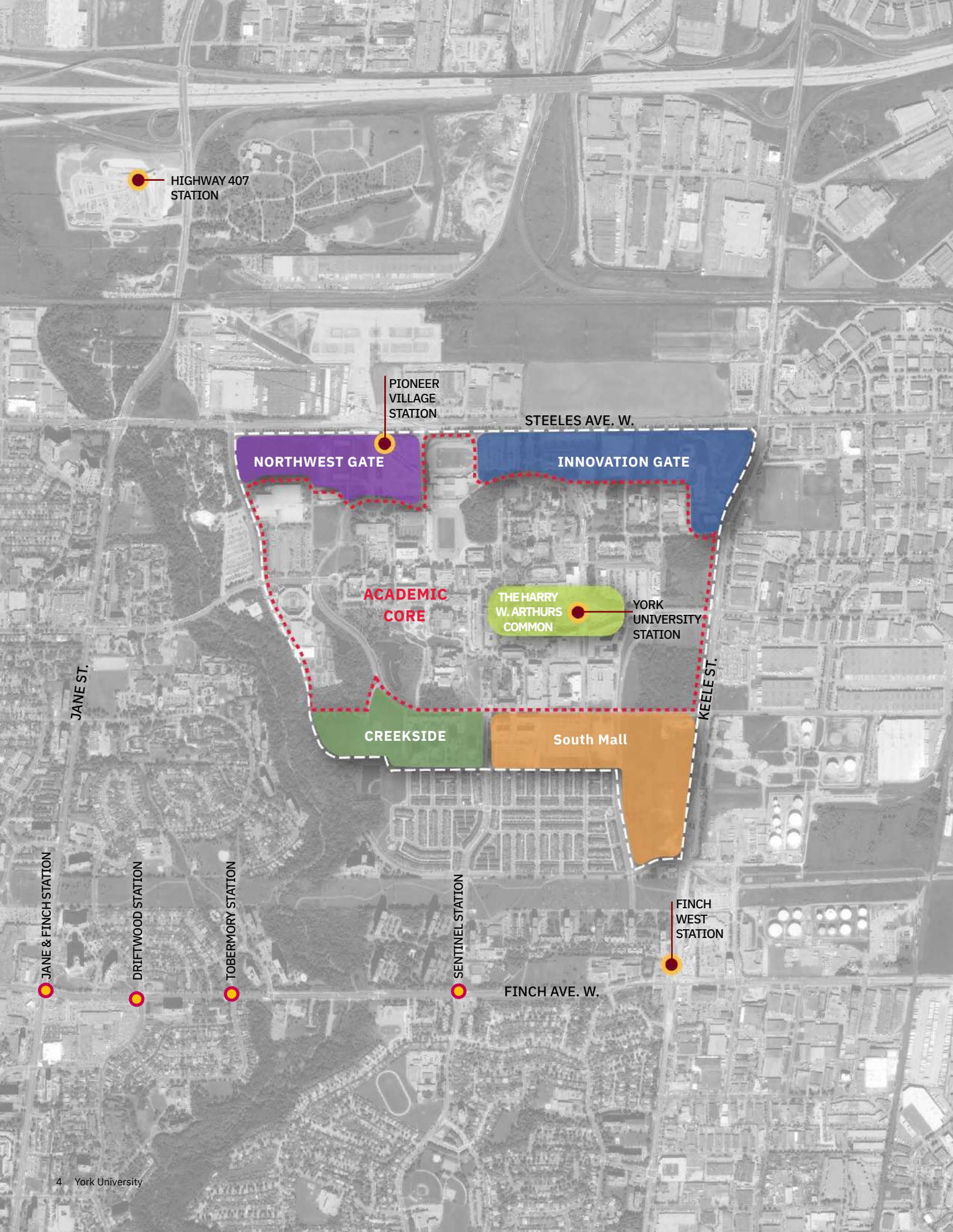
## RECONCILIATION

York University is committed to reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous peoples, and especially those who have longstanding relationships with the land on which York sits. We must acknowledge the ongoing colonial practices that have impacted Indigenous people and the land. York is committed to engaging Indigenous communities both inside and outside the university, to enrich teaching and research, as well as all students' learning experiences, and to support reconciliation in the broader community.



## STEWARDSHIP

York University will retain ownership of its properties, developing through partnerships, leases, or other means that ensure ongoing stewardship of this land for the benefit of the institution and of all those yet to come. In a climate-changing world, York University is also committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and aspires to achieve the highest level of sustainability and resilience in all plans, developments, and activities. In addition to connecting the campus and adjoining neighbourhoods with new greenways, shaded by an enhanced tree canopy, this includes protecting and enhancing Keele Campus's heritage assets and natural green spaces - including woodlots, gardens, and parks.



HIGHWAY 407 STATION

PIONEER VILLAGE STATION

STEELES AVE. W.

NORTHWEST GATE

INNOVATION GATE

ACADEMIC CORE

THE HARRY W. ARTHURS COMMON

YORK UNIVERSITY STATION

JANE ST.

KEELE ST.

CREEKSIDE

South Mall

JANE & FINCH STATION

DRIFTWOOD STATION

TOBERMORY STATION

SENTINEL STATION

FINCH WEST STATION

FINCH AVE. W.

# A VIBRANT, RESILIENT CAMPUS COMMUNITY

This document sets out a Vision and Strategy to transform Keele Campus into a vibrant, walkable, livable, sustainable, and complete community, centred around one of the country's great universities.

There is a rich history of great universities becoming great university towns. Universities are powerful magnets, natural centres of creative, artistic, cultural, athletic, and economic vitality. The Keele Campus is already the energetic centre of a growing GTHA corridor that includes the developmental potential of Downsview and the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The campus draw is even stronger now that you can get here so easily. Public investment in the multi-billion-dollar Yonge-University subway extension has made Keele Campus one of the most accessible locations in the region – linked by transit to Vaughan, Yorkdale and downtown Toronto, and by excellent road connections to Pearson Airport and around the region.

Encouraged by this enhanced accessibility, York University has created a Vision and Strategy that will help fulfill the university's responsibility as the steward of some of the most valuable land in the City of Toronto. By optimizing the use of this land, Keele Campus can become an unparalleled place to live, work and play, and an even better place to study, teach, innovate, and perform research. As more people come to find homes or establish businesses, this growing, self-selecting, and supportive community will complement and strengthen the university itself, just as York, its students, staff, faculty, and instructors will infuse the community with energy, creativity, and innovation.

Rooted in York University's academic mission, this Vision reinvigorates the Harry W. Arthurs Common and adds four new neighbourhoods, which will combine to strengthen the campus community. The four neighbourhoods, comprising almost 190 acres (76 hectares), include:

- a vibrant new South Mall with a main street that will serve the whole Keele Campus community;
- a quiet, green, natural, and residential district at Creekside;
- a lively community portal at Northwest Gate; and
- a research and high-tech portal at Innovation Gate.

These neighbourhoods, arising in many instances over what is now surface parking, will provide new university infrastructure, such as space for high-tech employment and social and entrepreneurial innovation, as well as homes, services, entertainment, and support options serving the university and its neighbours. What was once an isolated, automobile-dependent campus will become a lively, convenient, and highly functional, low-carbon community. The plan protects Keele Campus's natural spaces – including its woodlots, gardens, and parks – and it better connects the campus and adjoining neighbourhoods with new greenways, shaded by an enhanced tree canopy.

# A STRONG FOUNDATION

This Vision and Strategy rests on – and will become an essential companion piece to – the following plans and programs:

## BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE 2020-2025

The York University Academic Plan, Building a Better Future 2020 – 2025, challenges the university “to provide a broad sociodemographic of students with access to a high-quality education at a research-intensive university that is committed to enhancing the well-being of the communities we serve.” To that end, it sets out six fluid and interdependent Priorities for Action, each of which is reflected in this Vision and Strategy.

The priority From Access to Success points to York University’s commitment as a highly accessible institution, supporting students of all backgrounds and circumstances. A transformational improvement in physical (subway) access was a major factor in precipitating this Vision and Strategy. Similarly, the Vision is animated by the priority Working in Partnership – the pursuit of mutual benefit with research partners, development partners and community partners. By enhancing York’s institutional infrastructure and improving its physical and virtual community interface, this Vision also supports the university’s capacity to generate Knowledge for the Future (see the York University research plan on Page 8), and to advance 21st Century Learning. York also believes that Advancing Global Engagement begins with a commitment to engage locally – at the same time ensuring that York and its neighbours are Living Well Together.

*Building a Better Future 2020 – 2025: Six Priorities for Action*



## **TOWARD NEW HEIGHTS 2018-2023**

Toward New Heights is the York University Strategic Research Plan, its vision for accelerating the growth and development of research, scholarship, and creative activity. The plan affirms York's commitment to research excellence, and to develop and apply new knowledge to the benefit of society. The following intersecting themes reflect York's research strengths:

- Advancing Fundamental Inquiry and Critical Knowledge
- Analyzing Cultures and Mobilizing Creativity
- Building Healthy Lives, Communities and Environments
- Exploring and Interrogating the Frontiers of Science and Technology
- Forging a Just and Equitable World
- Integrating Entrepreneurial Innovation and the Public Good

The Keele Campus Vision and Strategy will directly bolster York University's research capacity and contribute to the knowledge-based economy throughout the region, for example, by advancing opportunities for private- and public-sector research partnerships and generating revenue for direct investment in York's mission priorities. Guided by the Academic Plan priority, Living Well Together, this Vision and Strategy will also help: build healthy lives, communities, and environments; forge a just and equitable world; and, integrate entrepreneurial innovation and the public good.

## **YORK UNIVERSITY SECONDARY PLAN (2009)**

The City of Toronto's York University Secondary Plan first envisioned four new neighbourhoods around the Academic Core. Years before the completion of the new subway extension in 2017, the Plan established a policy framework that enables the development of vibrant mixed-use neighbourhoods that would accommodate 25,000 new residents and make room for 21,000 new jobs. Now in place more than a decade, the Secondary Plan gives neighbours and prospective development partners certainty about the scope and scale of Keele Campus development.

## THE INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK FOR YORK UNIVERSITY: A GUIDE TO ACTION (2017)

The Indigenous Framework for York University: A Guide to Action was created building on the efforts of many Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the York community over several years. It sets out 10 principles to which York is committed, with an overarching goal of advancing reconciliation. Integral to this Framework is the need to engage Indigenous communities, both inside and outside the university.

## UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

York University is committed to advancing the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. While York is a recognized leader in sustainability research, teaching, partnerships, and development, this Vision and Strategy embraces the SDG challenge more broadly. For example, beyond the obvious goal #4, Quality Education, York has a pressing responsibility to advance #11, Sustainable Cities and Communities, beginning by optimizing public transit investments to create a more walkable, livable, low-footprint community. The university models #12, Responsible Consumption and Production, even while pursuing #13, Climate Action. New infrastructure will support: #8, Decent Work and Economic Growth; #9, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; #3, Good Health and Well-being; and #16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. A recent Times Higher Education Survey showed York is already among the top 50 among global universities in advancing Sustainable Cities and Communities and four other goals: #1, No Poverty; #10, Reduced Inequality; #15, Life on Land; and #17, Partnerships. This Vision and Strategy will provide further scope to improve our success on these and other goals.





## LIVING WELL TOGETHER – GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

Rooted in the York University Academic Plan, and especially in the priority Living Well Together, this Vision and Strategy is presented as a guiding document, challenging York's potential to become a better partner, locally and globally, and articulating the high-level directions and values that will anchor decades of stewardship and development.

In addition to the precepts of Building a Better Future 2020-2025 and the other foundational documents listed above, the following are a set of specific Goals and Principles that will inform the Vision and guide implementation of the Strategy.

### Informing the Vision

**Distinctly "York U":** Celebrate and complement York University's values, identity, and diversity. We are a community of change-makers who want to build a better future.

**Community Well-Being:** Create a positive influence on the health and well-being of the York University community, and the broader local and global communities.

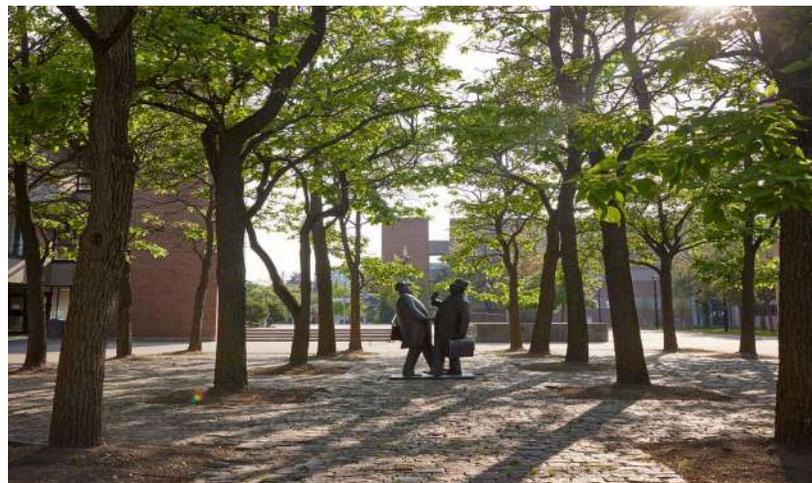
**Reconciliation:** The university remains committed to the 10 principles of the Indigenous Framework for York University: A Guide to Action, and especially to its promise to engage with Indigenous peoples inside and outside the university community.

**Complete Community:** Create inclusive, cohesive, safe, and universally accessible neighbourhoods where all can live, work, learn, and play, and provide a contiguous public realm that is inviting, high-quality, all-season, and 24/7. Enhance and expand diverse housing options (including affordable and market-based), supporting uses and employment spaces (e.g., retail, commercial and office).

**A Well-connected Campus:** Connect the campus to the surrounding communities – spatially through an integrated public realm, socially through engagement and partnership, and digitally through online platforms. Make walking and cycling convenient, safe, and delightful – the preferred options year-round.

**Sustainability and Resilience:** Advance and model sustainability in land management and development; lead by example. Nurture a natural and built community that is robust and resilient in the face of climate change, as well as other environmental, social, and economic shifts.

**Experiential Learning and Academic Research:** Foster partnerships to create places and opportunities for experiential learning; and to establish settings and attract industries that support research and social and entrepreneurial innovation.



## Guiding Implementation

**Optimize Mission Value:** Prioritize academic mission values and social benefits – in balance with generating an economic return that also will be invested in the academic mission.

**Engagement:** Engage internal and external communities, including university leadership, students, faculty, instructors, staff, alumni, Indigenous communities, neighbours, governments and agencies, and other key stakeholders.

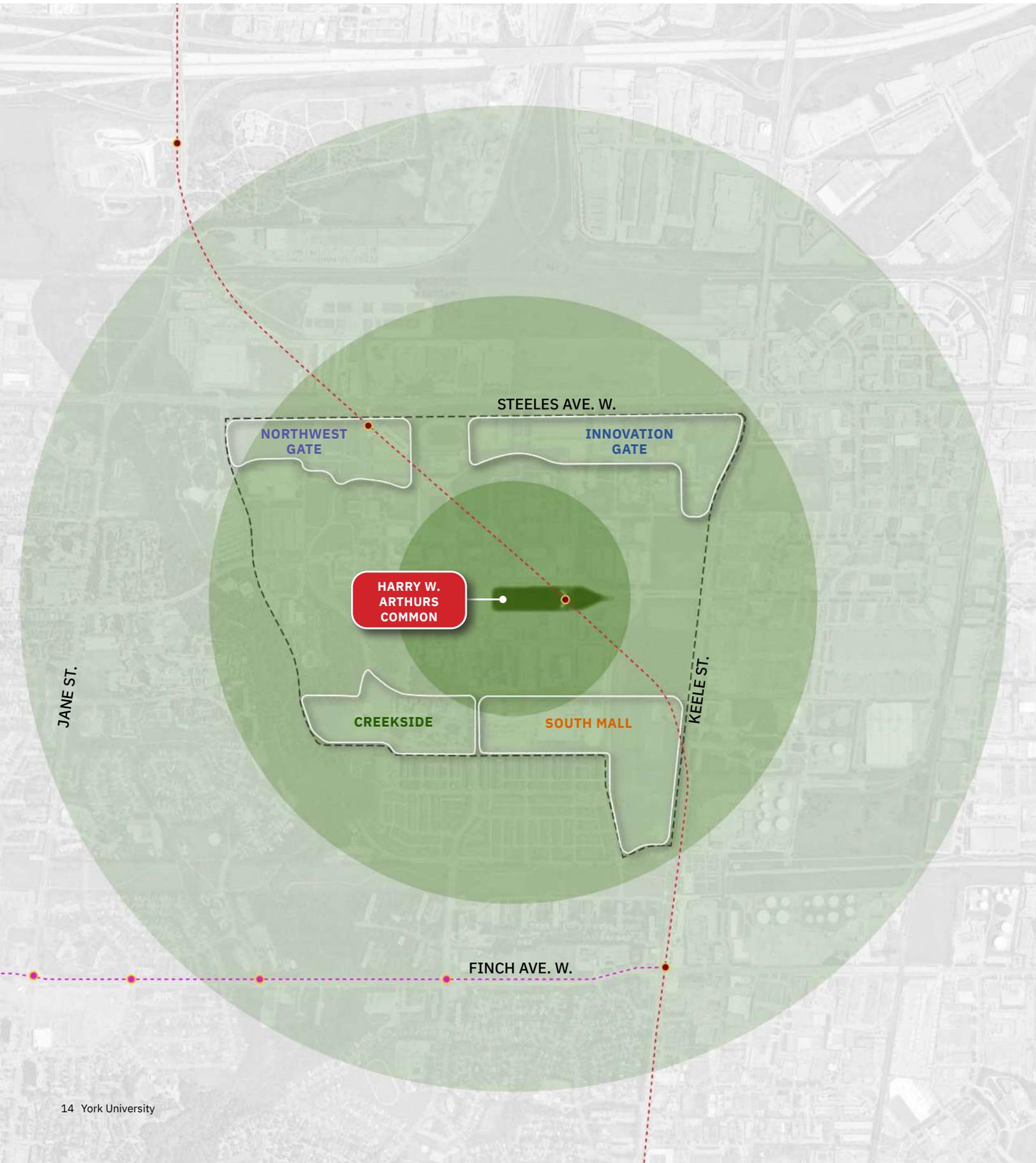
**Responsiveness:** Be adaptable to evolving market conditions, emerging university strategic priorities, and a changing world.

**Land Retention:** Retain land ownership, through partnerships, leasing and other transaction models; consider disposition only to achieve significant strategic benefit.

**Market and Social Acuity:** Empower an entity with the professional capacity, the commercial expertise, and the independence to work collaboratively with partners to implement the Vision and Strategy.

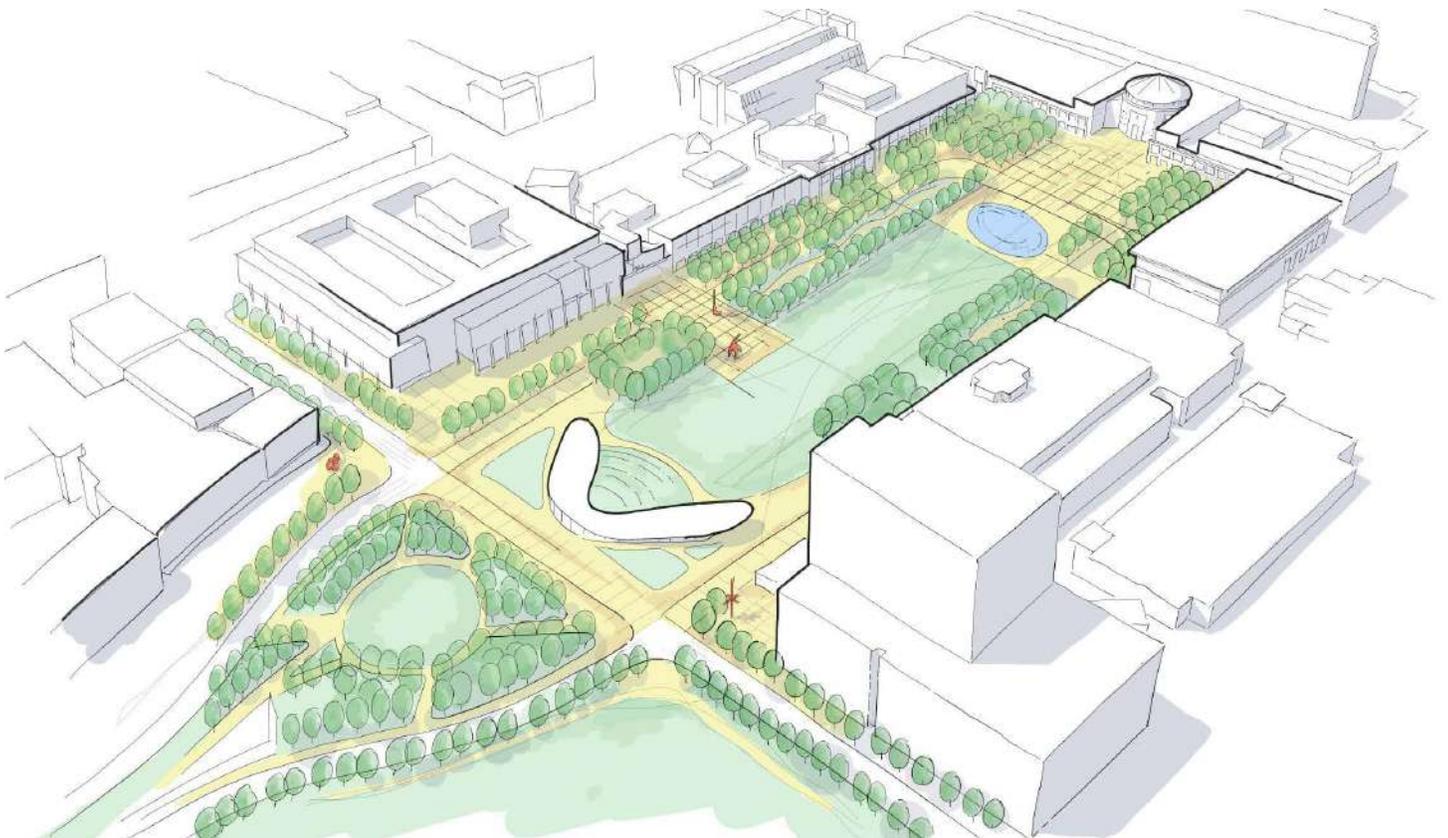


# A BEATING HEART – AND FOUR NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS

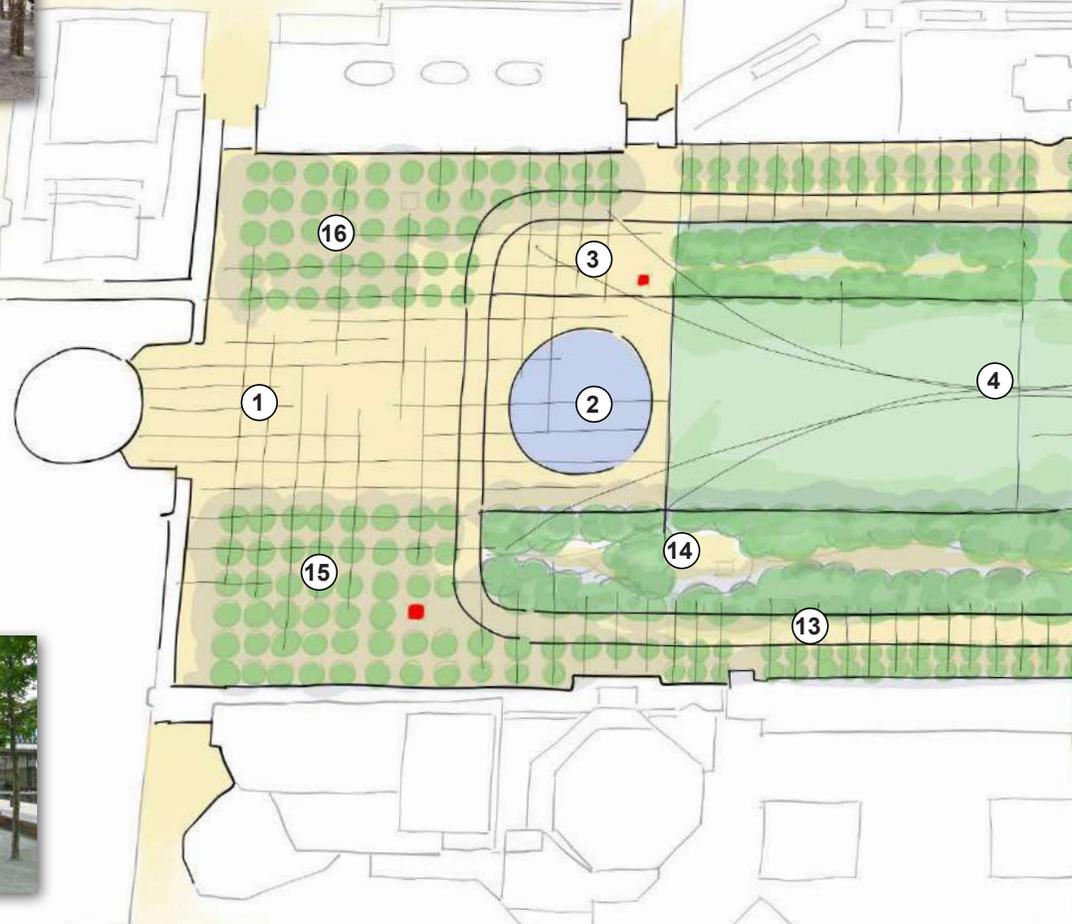


## THE HARRY W. ARTHURS COMMON

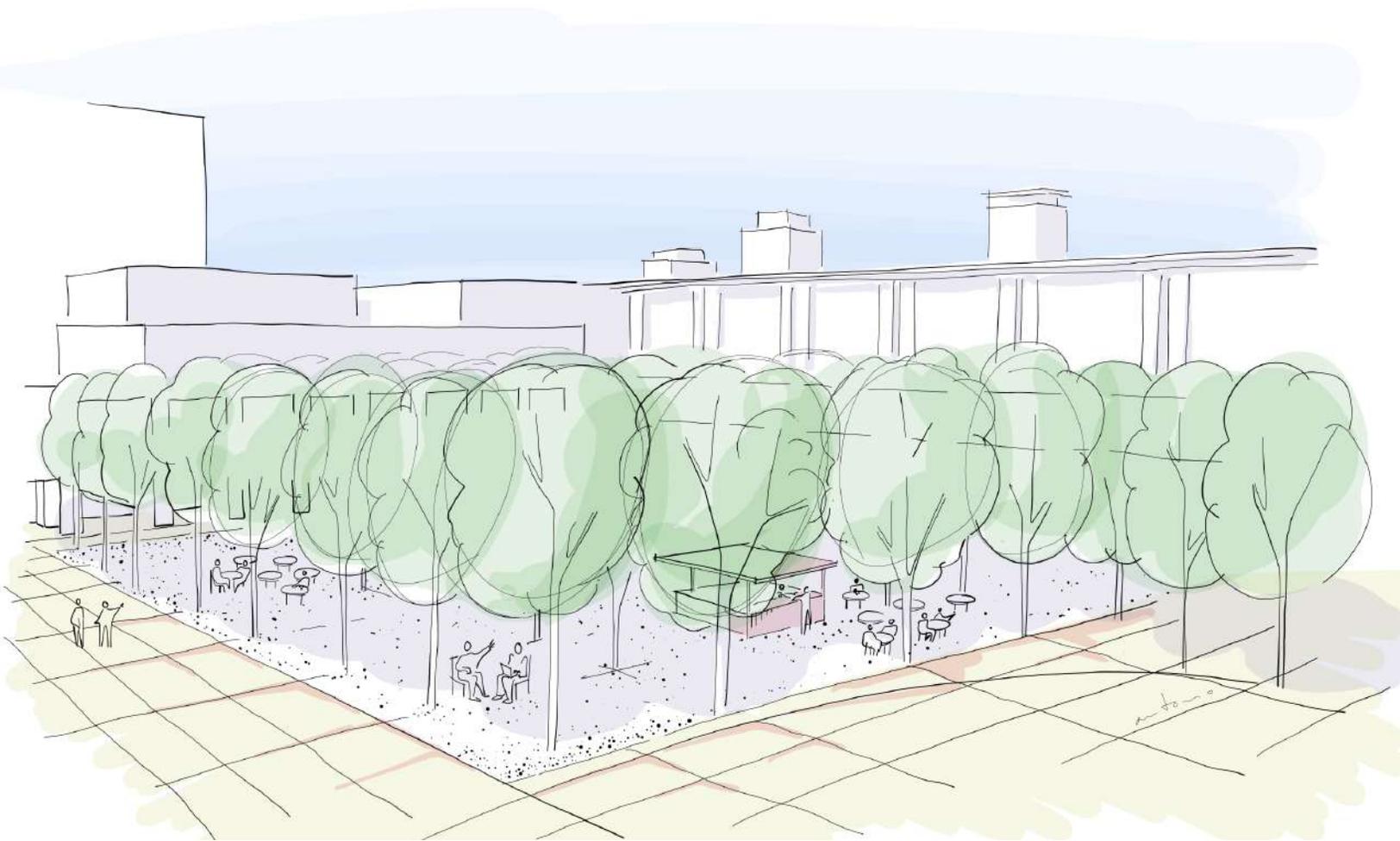
The Common is the heart of Keele Campus, a place where the community gathers for ceremony or celebration, for play and for rest. In recent years, however, this grand, festive space seemed to be undermined by the university's own success: with 1,700 buses a day delivering students from all over the region, York's formal front door looked increasingly like a transit loop. The extension of the Yonge-University subway line and the opening of the sweeping and elegant York University Subway station has given the space new life and renewed potential. There is an opportunity to reclaim the Common's ceremonial splendor, to fulfill its purpose as a grand entrance and a cohesive hub around which the campus, the four new neighbourhoods, and the surrounding community revolve. As illustrated in the following renderings, the Vision proposes to use diverse landscapes and elements (including local, native, and low-maintenance plantings) to form open-space 'rooms' that will function independently or combine to accommodate large-scale events – making the Common, again and ongoing, the beating heart of Keele Campus.



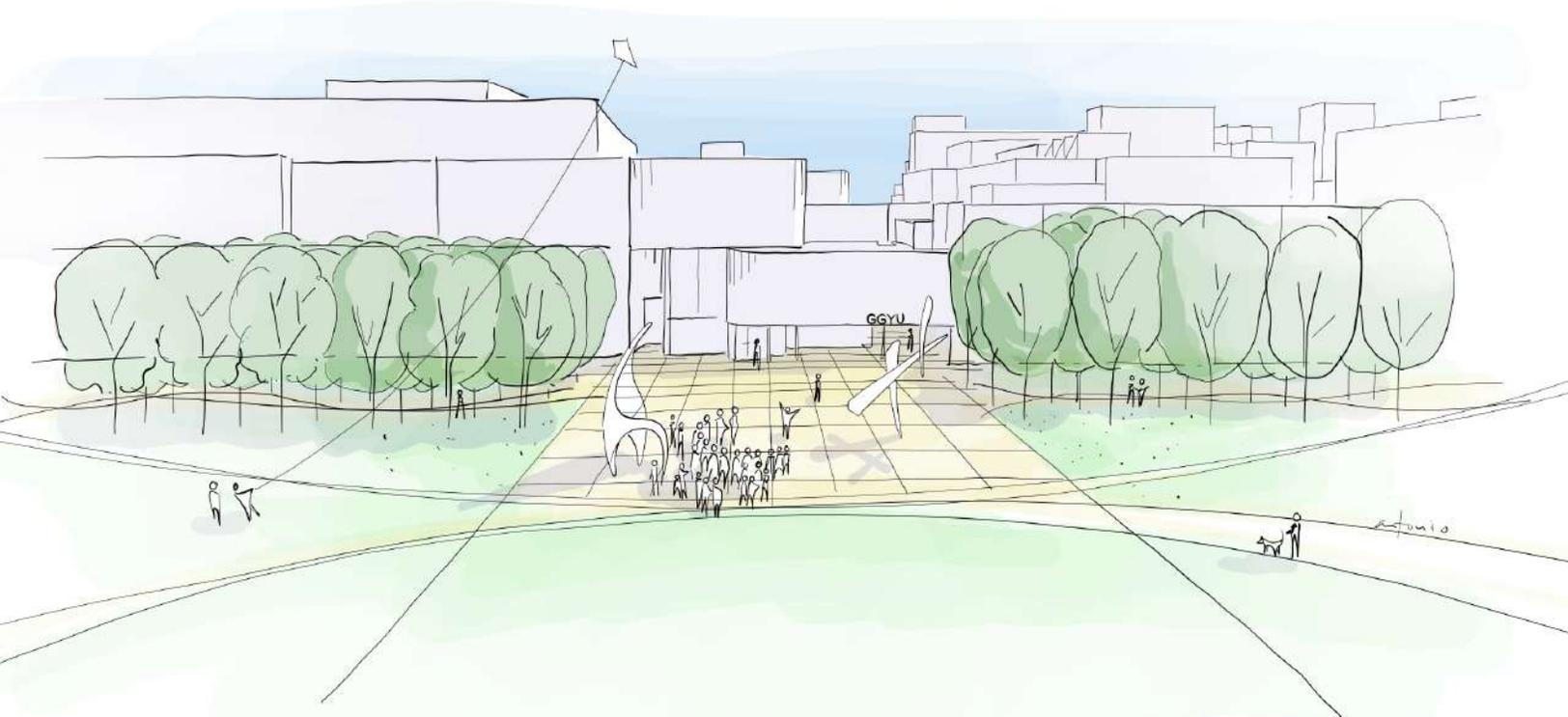
# Reimagining Harry W. Arthurs Common







VIEW FROM HARRY W. ARTHURS COMMON LOOKING NORTHWEST



VIEW FROM HARRY W. ARTHURS COMMON LOOKING AT THE FUTURE GOLDFARB ART GALLERY

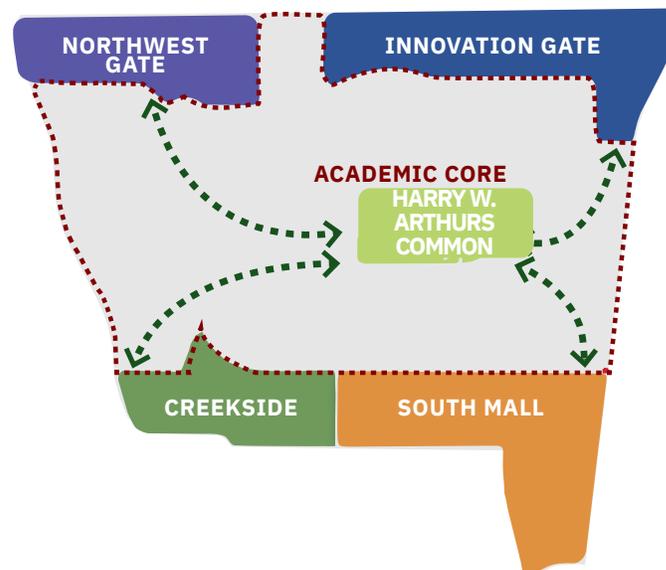
## FOUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

The following describes four distinct but interconnecting neighbourhoods that will all support the functionality and livability of the academic core and help create an all-embracing Keele Campus community. Working in tandem with our Glendon and soon-to-be Markham campuses, York University's capacity as an intellectual, creative, social, and economic centre in the GTHA will be further enhanced.

While unique in type and purpose, all four neighbourhoods will share some consistent features: each will have a range of housing options, as well as service retail to meet the day-to-day needs of a healthy, pedestrian-oriented community. Each neighbourhood will enjoy convenient connection to all elements and amenities on the academic campus, as well as unrivaled access to some of the best transit service in the GTHA. All will be welcoming to neighbours in nearby communities, including Jane and Finch, the Village at York, and many others. And all will provide opportunities to further realize York's commitment to Indigenous reconciliation, from acknowledging or incorporating traditional land practices to offering spaces for Indigenous peoples and/or for art and cultural expression.

The profiles below set out the features that make these neighbourhoods distinct and complementary, as well as some of the features and opportunities that will appeal to potential public, private, and non-profit development partners:

- South Mall
- Creekside
- Northwest Gate
- Innovation Gate



Keele Campus's  
downtown: restaurants &  
cafes, childcare, health &  
wellness services

A residential  
neighbourhood with a  
range of amenities  
and community spaces

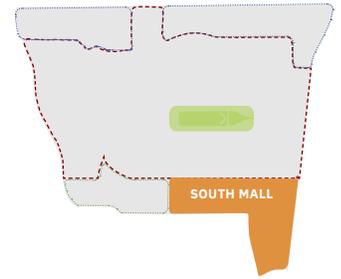
Housing for students,  
faculty, instructors, staff and  
others; varied types, tenure  
and affordability options

Commercial  
spaces  
for everything from  
entrepreneurial start-ups  
to maturing local  
businesses

Main street  
features-  
a grocery store; perhaps  
a butcher, baker and  
hardware



VIEW FROM HAYNES AVE. LOOKING NORTH



## SOUTH MALL

### Character

The South Mall will be the campus community’s downtown – a medium-intensity residential neighbourhood that is energized and fully served by street- and podium-level commercial services. A new Main Street will be the focal point, with restaurants and cafes, childcare, community space, health-and-wellness services, and commercial space for everything from small-scale entrepreneurial start-ups to maturing local businesses. Development will include much-needed student housing, as well as other housing forms, tenure, and affordability options, including housing for faculty and staff, live-work options, and housing for seniors. This animated neighbourhood will connect to the academic core, to the other three neighbourhoods, to the city, and beyond.

Beyond the service retail available in every neighbourhood, the South Mall will include main street features, perhaps including a full-service grocery store, a bakery, a greengrocer, a butcher, or a hardware store. Health services might include medical clinics, a dentist, a kinesiology clinic, and related well-being services.

While some large green spaces exist within the area, new pedestrian connections may include a north-south nature corridor linking to the protected Boynton Woodlot and to the hydro corridor to the south, creating a tree-lined linear park and pedestrian thoroughfare for visitors and residents. A pedestrian-friendly east west corridor would also facilitate movement between Keele Street and The Quad residences and beyond.



**LEGEND**

-  SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY CENTRE
-  WOODLOTS
-  PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS
-  OPEN SPACE
-  ACTIVE FRONTAGE
-  PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
-  IMPROVED STREETSCAPE
-  SUBWAY LINE
-  SUBWAY STATION

-  EXISTING DESTINATION
-  FUTURE DESTINATION



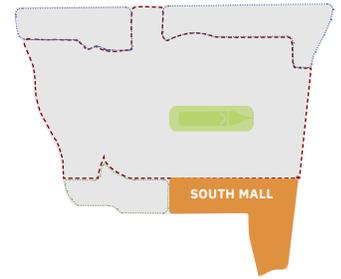
The Quad Residences



Future Main Street (e.g. Haynes Avenue)



Finch West Subway Station



## Opportunities and Partnerships

Initial feedback from industry and potential partners revealed significant enthusiasm for a higher intensity, mixed-use neighbourhood with a focus on residential offerings. Particular draws include the South Mall's frontage on Keele Street, strong connections to the Quad Student Housing developments and the Village at York, and excellent access to the York University Subway Station, the Pioneer Village Station, and to the Finch West LRT (2023). Current residents on and off campus will also support and benefit from the retail uses that are critical for the success of the South Mall. Partners may also help create community spaces that offer programming to the university or wider community.

Land in the South Mall is relatively unencumbered, serviced, and can be subdivided into optimal development parcels. There may also be a longer-term opportunity to intensify South Mall development, as the levels outlined in the City of Toronto's 2009 York University Secondary Plan are below typical expectations in such a well-served transit-oriented area. The 2023 closure of Downsview Airport may result in the removal of airport height restrictions, thereby providing a potentially wider range of land use options in the future.



Future Health and Wellness Centre



Future Cafe at Haynes Avenue and The Pond Road



Future Affordable Rental Housing

A quiet corner with strong connections to the land and to Black Creek

A lower-intensity neighbourhood, still offering a range of amenities

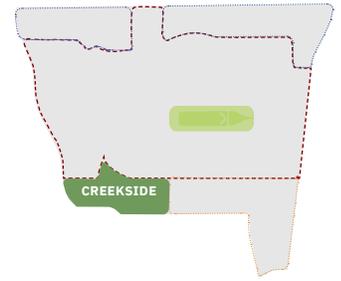
Varied forms of housing for students, faculty, staff, families, etc.

Multi-generational living, including affordable housing and seniors' housing

A neighbourhood imbued with health, wellness and cultural heritage



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF BLACK CREEK VALLEY LOOKING EAST TOWARDS CREEKSIDE



## CREEKSIDE

### Character

Away from the hustle and bustle of South Mall is Creekside, a quiet corner with strong connections to the land and to Black Creek. A lower-intensity neighbourhood, Creekside is envisioned with a multi-generational focus that offers varied forms of housing to students, seniors, and families. With the Black Creek valley, the York Arboretum, and other permanently protected green spaces all adjacent, the neighbourhood will be imbued with a sense of health, wellness, and cultural heritage – while still boasting a range of services and amenities all within a short walk.

A family-friendly neighbourhood, Creekside is a natural home for a new school and community centre, and is an ideal location for a range of educational and cultural facilities, including a potential new Indigenous centre, as a companion to Skennen'kó:wa Gamig, “the House of Great Peace,” across Pond Road in the protected Osgoode Woodlot. The Black Creek Valley conservation lands provide an idyllic setting for a range of nature experiences and recreational programs. There is a natural and protected greenway connecting from Black Creek along Hoover Creek to Stong Pond, and from there, any number of additional green and treed passages may connect to other parts of the campus. Creekside also features the Maloca Community Garden, a treasured space for community members to experience growing their own food, hold outdoor events or enjoy a great setting for sustainable learning/teaching. North of the garden, still nestled into Black Creek Valley, is the heritage-designated Hoover House, a ready opportunity for an adaptive reuse project. Dedicated indoor and outdoor spaces in Creekside could accommodate a range of health and wellness services (physicians, physio- and massage therapy, mental health) and activities (yoga, educational workshops, fitness classes, community engagement, cultural events, and outdoor adventures tours).

Creekside may also be an alternative location for a grocery store that meets the needs of those living on campus and beyond – a boon to everyone who is living car free. As part of the York University housing strategy, the potential renovation or replacement of the Assiniboine and Passy Garden graduate housing residences would provide new opportunities for multi-generational living, including affordable housing and seniors’ housing, which might range from independent to assisted living, allowing more residents to age in place.



# EXISTING DESTINATION

# FUTURE DESTINATION



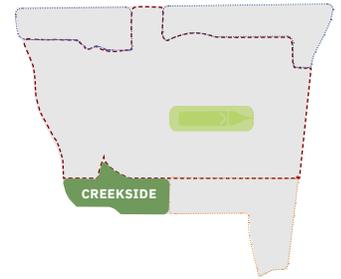
Maloca Community Garden



Future "Farm-to-Table Cafe"



Historical Hoover House



## Opportunities and Partnerships

Creekside has considerable student housing stock and natural heritage features that constrain development potential. But the resulting lower intensity and plentiful green spaces create an appeal to residents and other users across the four neighbourhoods. That draw will be increased with new features, such as a school and supportive services (e.g., community centres, health and wellness-focused space), that serve York students, staff, faculty, instructors, new residents and nearby neighbours alike.

Market partnership is an option for revitalization of student housing stock, including, for example, renewal or redevelopment of Passy and Assiniboine residences. The university may also consider alternative service delivery models for redevelopment and management of Creekside student housing.

Adult living, including a continuum of seniors' housing options and long-term care, presents a strong appeal to the market, especially given the nearby presence of a wide range of academic programs (particularly associated with the Faculty of Health), potential research partnerships and proximity to university and neighbourhood amenities.

Creekside will also draw university and community partners for programmatic activities as well as those interested in developing market and non-market housing, including those dedicated to creating affordable-housing options.



Future access to Black Creek Valley



Future Seniors' Residence



Future Tower Renewal/  
Infill

A second grand entrance to York University's Keele Campus

A transit-supportive mixed-use Community

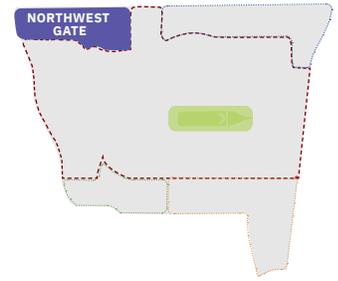
A practical range of residential, commercial and office spaces

Extensive recreation spaces and programming, shared with the surrounding community

The place to live an active, vehicle-free lifestyle



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF NORTHWEST GATE LOOKING EAST



## NORTHWEST GATE

### Character

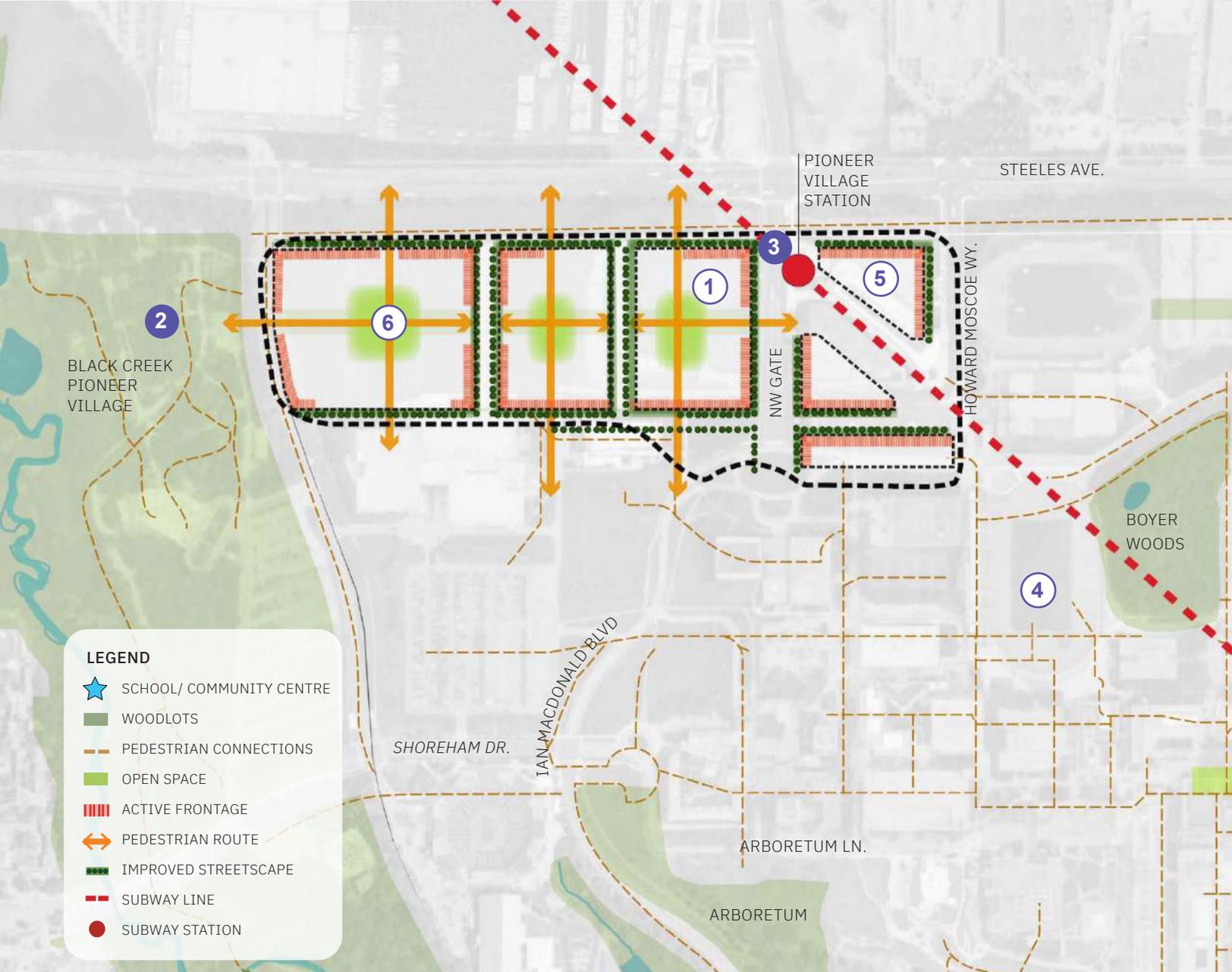
Anchored by the iconic Pioneer Village Subway Station, Northwest Gate will stand as a prominent public entrance to Keele Campus. It also may provide one of the first development opportunities within this Vision and Strategy, through the potential to transform a collection of surface parking lots (in some cases already serviced) into a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented community with the convenient street-level services most essential to residents and passers-by.

Northwest Gate is envisioned as an engaging mix of higher-intensity residential buildings, with office and other commercial uses, such as for Toronto's burgeoning film industry. Direct access to supportive services and to major athletic venues such as the Aviva Tennis Centre, York Lions Stadium, and Toronto Track and Field Centre, along with convenient cycle and walking trails, make this an ideal place to live an active, vehicle-free lifestyle.

With proximity to the subway and the university, Northwest Gate has the potential to attract and accommodate a critical mass of residents and businesses, activating the community and campus on weekends, evenings, and summer months. Housing options can serve a variety of incomes and lifestyles, with rental buildings, multi-family buildings, townhouses, condominiums, mid-rise apartment buildings and live-work studios.

The neighbourhood will also benefit from indoor and outdoor recreation spaces and programming, shared between York University and the larger community. These spaces can integrate athletic facilities (e.g., pools or gyms) as well as social hubs and common areas for studying, leisure, and recreational play (e.g., games lounge, community garden, conference and event room, or BBQ patio). Should the university consider relocating or adding to some of its larger athletic arenas, there may be additional development potential for complementary facilities, as well as for residential, hospitality, retail, office, and medical uses. As a future centre for large events such as festivals and concerts, Northwest Gate can also become an economic engine for the university outside of game days.

Northwest Gate may benefit from York University relationships (e.g., School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design) and other creative partnerships that are growing in Toronto (e.g., large and small production studios), helping bring more Canadian artists and stories to the world and strengthening a collaborative community of artists, technologists, entrepreneurs, researchers, and academics devoted to creative exploration, cross-disciplinary innovation, and creative excellence.



**LEGEND**

- SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY CENTRE
- WOODLOTS
- PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS
- OPEN SPACE
- ACTIVE FRONTAGE
- PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- IMPROVED STREETSCAPE
- SUBWAY LINE
- SUBWAY STATION

- EXISTING DESTINATION
- FUTURE DESTINATION



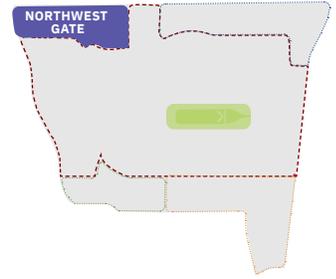
A Future Mixed Use Building



Black Creek Pioneer Village



Pioneer Village Subway Station



## Opportunities and Partnerships

The Pioneer Village subway station makes Northwest Gate a prime portal, locally and regionally. This subway access, coupled with existing vehicular connectivity, creates market appeal that is bolstered by Northwest Gate’s frontage on Steeles Avenue West, providing visibility for both commercial and residential uses.

As home to the university’s outdoor athletic facilities, also on Steeles Avenue West, Northwest Gate caters to the student market, while providing high-demand residential options for the surrounding community. The neighbourhood further benefits from its proximity to natural and cultural features, including the Black Creek Valley and Pioneer Village.

Northwest Gate carries the highest-density designation in the Secondary Plan among the four neighbourhoods. The university could partner with motivated residential developers (private and non-profit) to create a mixed-use residential community. Partnership opportunities also exist with organizations that deliver programming to the university or the wider community – including community event space, daycare, or recreation centres. To ensure continuity of athletic spaces, the university may give preference to partners who will work to replace or renovate its existing athletic facilities.

Government support for Transit-Oriented Communities (“TOC”) may create additional opportunity to partner with the City or the Province on development integrated into station or parking infrastructure, perhaps expanding Northwest Gate’s developable footprint.



York Lions Stadium



A Future Mixed Use Building



A Future Courtyard

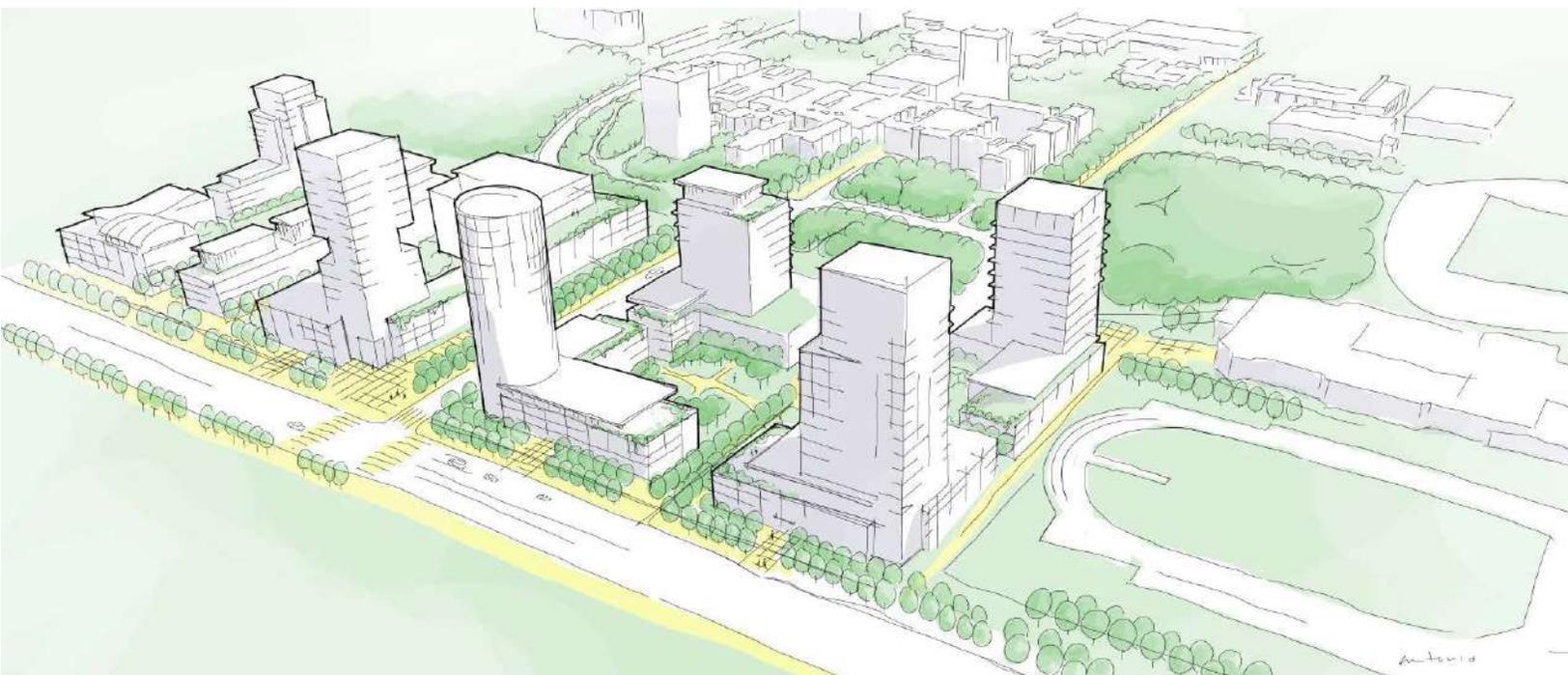
Keele  
Campus's front door  
to the wider research  
and technology  
communities

A place to  
generate ideas,  
network, and share  
knowledge

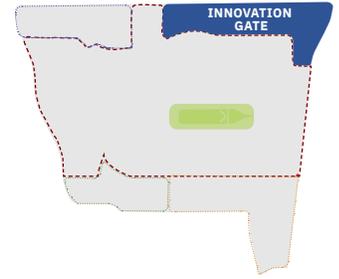
Opportunities  
for private, public  
and non-profit  
partnerships

Spaces for  
experiential learning,  
living labs and other  
research and  
entrepreneurial activities

Medium- to  
higher-intensity  
spaces for research  
and technology, plus  
office and residential  
uses



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF INNOVATION GATE LOOKING SOUTHEAST



## INNOVATION GATE

### Character

If Northwest Gate will be a prominent community portal, Innovation Gate will be the Keele Campus front door to the local and global research and technology communities. Researchers and students will collaborate and partner with industry peers in a hub for innovation, research, commercialization, and entrepreneurship. Innovation Gate will provide spaces for York University to accommodate private- and public-sector partners that are dependent upon their connection to the university and that create reciprocal benefits like experiential learning for students. The research and innovation focus will define this community as a place for idea creation, networking, and knowledge sharing.

Innovation Gate is envisioned with a mix of medium- to higher-intensity uses, including class-leading research, technology, and office functions, as well as other transit-oriented uses, including some residential. The neighbourhood will complement existing and future office space along the north side of Steeles Avenue. There will also be a mix of street-level retail and personal services for residents and workers, all within a 15-minute walk of either the York University or Pioneer Village subway stations.

Innovation Gate is an ideal location for co-op education, experiential learning, and living-lab initiatives that support research and entrepreneurial activities, engaging students, faculty, and staff in solving real-world challenges. Linking academia and business, Innovation Gate has a unique opportunity to leverage York's intellectual assets - its students and professors, its research and innovation - to incubate new business, industries and organizations.

For example, Innovation Gate would be a natural home for applied research partners from the York Region's expanding technology industry, perhaps including an innovation hub supporting fields such as life sciences, climate adaptation, health care, information technology, or engineering. Purpose-built research space could be highly attractive to community partners in the liberal arts and interdisciplinary disciplines, even while modeling York's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The university will prioritize projects that respect the historic character of Stong House and Stong Barn, highlighting, protecting, restoring, and celebrating these and other heritage structures.



- # EXISTING DESTINATION
- # FUTURE DESTINATION



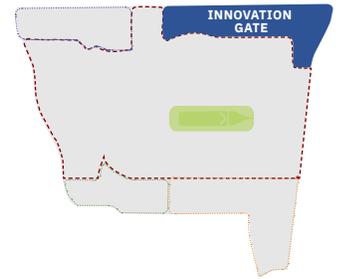
A Future Research and Innovation Lab



A Future Office/ Research Building



Stong House



## Opportunities and Partnerships

Innovation Gate's proximity to the university will support research and innovation-driven tenancy, attracting compatible industries that are drawn by synergies and research partnerships. Keele Campus will also draw employers looking for a direct line to talented new graduates. Convenient access to both the York University and Pioneer Village subway stations, and to other services and amenities, will enhance market desirability.

Institutional investors will see appeal in life-science research space, where there is strong demand for infrastructure across North America. Innovation Gate will also be ideal for publicly funded research partnerships.

A successful Innovation Gate neighbourhood will leverage the university's research and innovation strength, drawing partnerships with technology developers, research institutions, industry leaders, and non-profits. Other options include partnering with government entities on mutually beneficial research opportunities.

The university may choose to develop an innovation park or a research and innovation hub – a long-term, strategic decision that would require a significant university investment and a clearly articulated vision to attract support. The university may unlock value to invest in this research and innovation hub through revenue-generating residential transactions.



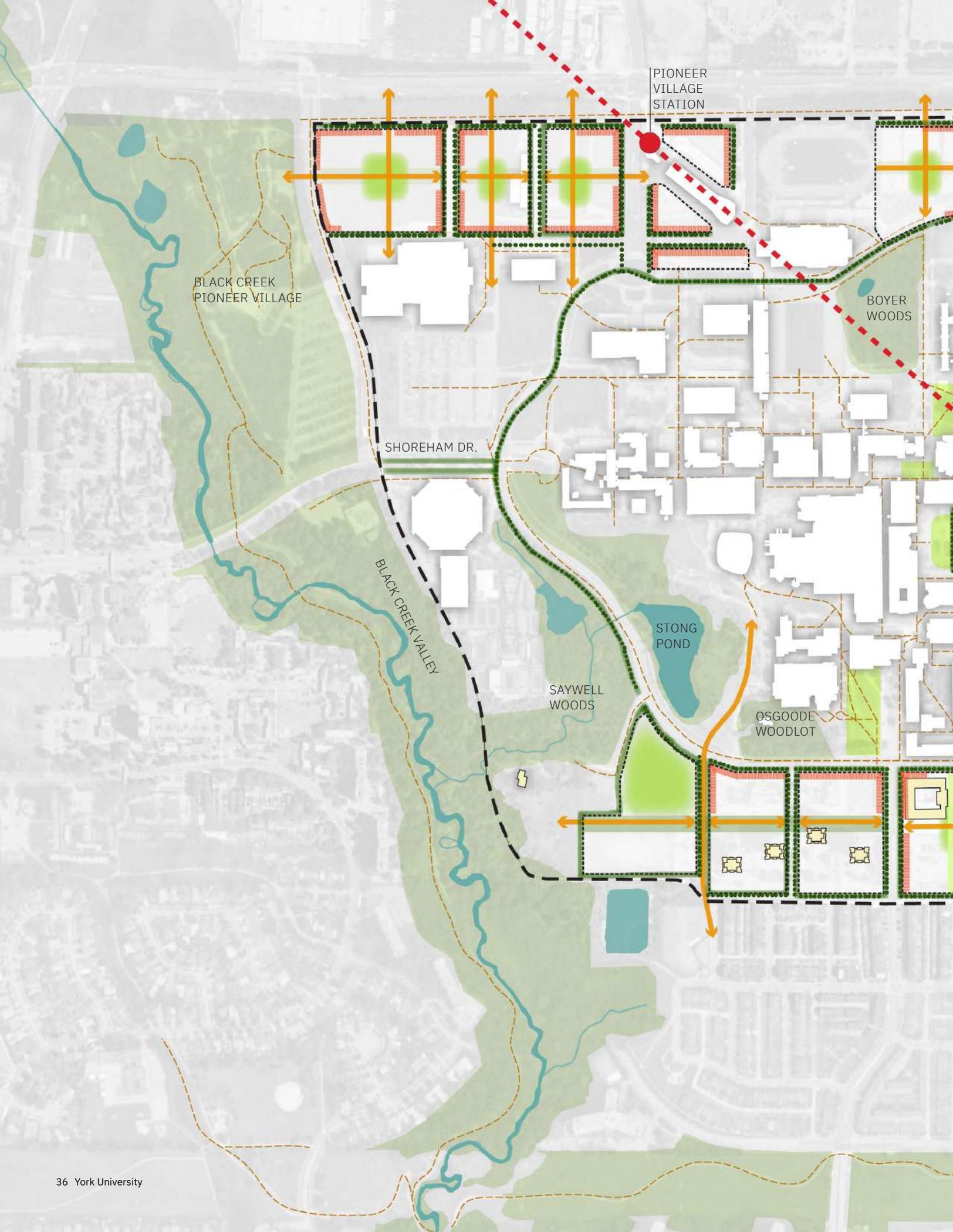
A Future Artificial Intelligence lab



Harry Sherman Crowe Housing Co-Op



York University Subway Station



PIONEER VILLAGE STATION

BLACK CREEK PIONEER VILLAGE

BOYER WOODS

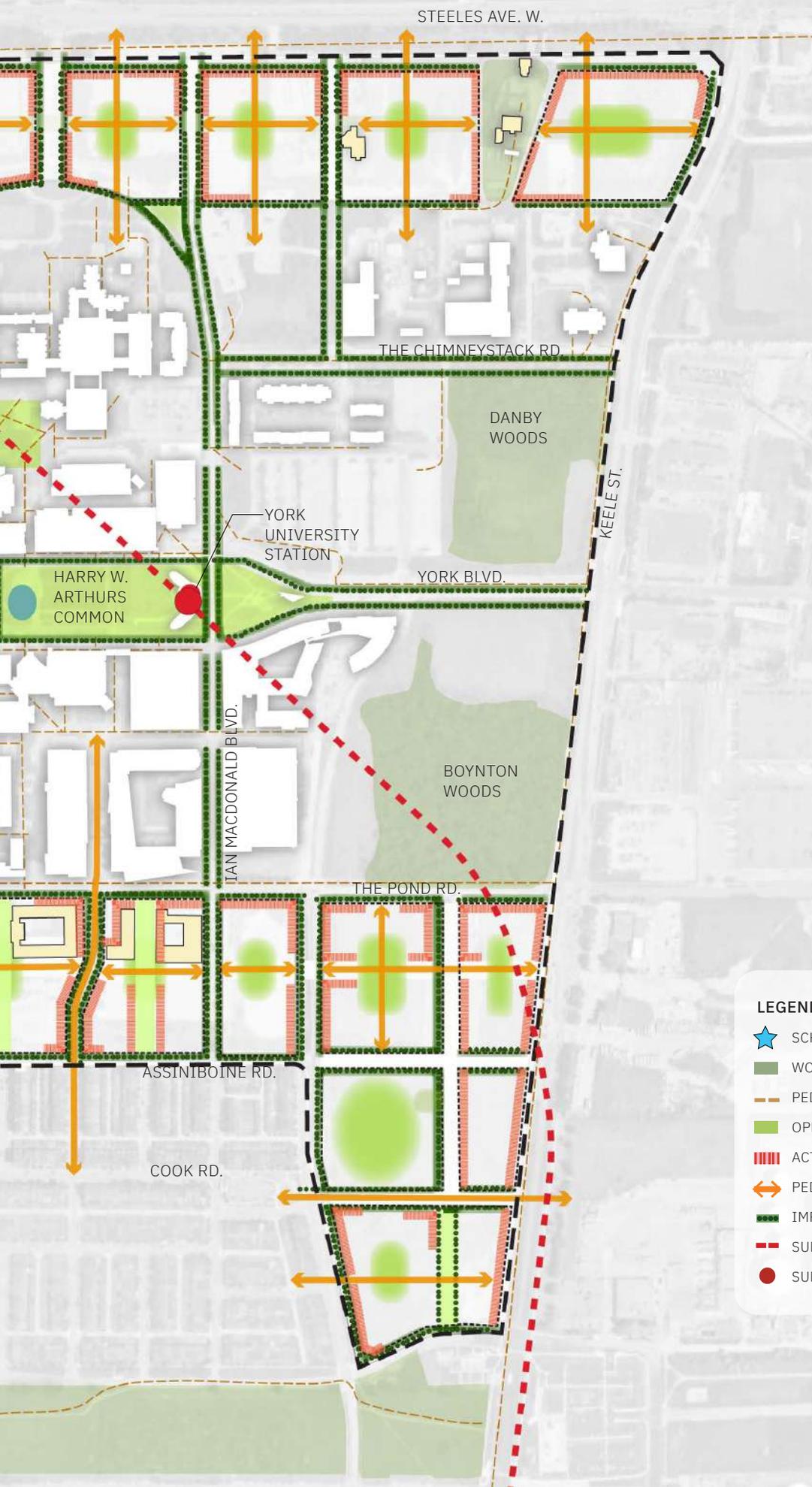
SHOREHAM DR.

BLACK CREEK VALLEY

STONG POND

SAYWELL WOODS

OSGOODE WOODLOT



**LEGEND**

-  SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY CENTRE
-  WOODLOTS
-  PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS
-  OPEN SPACE
-  ACTIVE FRONTAGE
-  PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
-  IMPROVED STREETSCAPE
-  SUBWAY LINE
-  SUBWAY STATION

# IMPLEMENTATION

In implementing this Vision and Strategy, York University will be guided by a set of five principles that will advance and safeguard the university's best interests while optimizing mutual benefit for the academy and the community.

## OPTIMIZE MISSION VALUE

The Vision and Strategy for the Keele Campus is conceived to support the three fundamental components of York University's mission of teaching and learning, research and innovation, and service to the community. All development plans and investment decisions will be judged for their ability to meet direct teaching and research needs, to generate complementary social and community benefit, and/or to generate revenue which can be used to advance the mission.

This Vision and Strategy will therefore enhance our reputation as a progressive University working collaboratively with our partners and other stakeholders to maximize the social, cultural and economic benefits for those we serve through education, discovery, and engagement. We recognize that lands can still be valued either as a location on which to build academic infrastructure or as an asset that can be sold (or perhaps leased) to raise revenue. But even greater value can be achieved if development is integrated, creating complete, vibrant, safe, and highly functional communities that benefit students, faculty, instructors, staff, and the wider population.

In choosing this more-expansive approach, the challenge is to optimize mission value across the following categories:

- Projects that deliver academic infrastructure or social benefit directly, with no offsetting financial return and, potentially, requiring a university contribution.
- Opportunities that deliver indirect academic mission or social value, for example:
  - Academic, research, or innovation space designed to foster university/private sector collaboration;
  - Affordable housing options that improve housing equity;
  - Neighbourhood projects;
  - Community spaces (within the campus and connecting to the larger community).
- Projects that, while still achieving university priorities, will also generate revenue to re-invest directly in the academic mission. These might include:
  - Housing options for students, faculty, instructors, staff, seniors, and the community;
  - Research and innovation infrastructure that attracts industry partners;
  - Commercial space that generates employment and attracts intellectual partners.

- Commercial projects pursued primarily for their ability to generate revenue for investment supporting York’s academic mission.

In implementing this Vision, it will be important to apply a decision-making framework that clearly articulates the university’s mission-based criteria, guiding principles, and the rules of engagement for developing the university lands. A transparent framework will help measure opportunities against the university’s strategic priorities, testing development industry trends and expectations against the university’s best, long-term interest.

### Alignment with University Strategic Objectives

This Vision and Strategy will need to be integrated with the university’s larger capital plans to ensure that strategic and financial goals align and that the university’s opportunities, objectives, and priorities are clearly understood. That, again, will require the university or its development body to assess each new opportunity for its ability to generate:

- Direct mission value;
- Complementary social or community value; or
- Revenue for reinvestment.



ACADEMIC MISSION



REVENUE



WELLNESS



RESEARCH



RECREATION/  
ATHLETICS



EXPERIENTIAL  
LEARNING



AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING



LONG-TERM CARE &  
SENIORS HOUSING



SUSTAINABLE  
INITIATIVES



CHILDCARE

Using these value calculations, the university can better align its larger capital plan to coordinate with the amounts and timing of anticipated revenue.

Revenue calculations will also depend upon projects that require upfront investments or financial support, but over time will provide a financial return or become self-sustaining. These include infrastructure investments that are necessary to prepare land for development opportunities – e.g., sewers, water mains, roads, and sidewalks. Transitional financial support might also involve temporary initial investments in needed services or amenities. For example, a short-term subsidy might support a grocery store that is required to make a new neighbourhood livable and desirable, but which may not be fully profitable until the neighbourhood population reaches critical mass.

Ongoing analysis will enable the university to track and align expenditures and revenue expectations, and to adapt to changing financial and strategic priorities.

## Development Intensity

It will be necessary to:

- Identify developments which, by their intensity and/or marketability, can improve the viability of less profitable uses, achieving social benefit while ameliorating the financial impact;
- Favour higher development intensity where it demonstrates a sustainable land management approach that optimizes use of a limited asset;
- Act to adjust intensity limits where and when circumstances demand.

## ENGAGEMENT

This entire document constitutes a broad and all-encompassing engagement strategy for York University; it will draw the university and the broader community closer together for mutual benefit. But given the long implementation period (perhaps two or three decades) and the imperative of deep community collaboration, a wide-ranging and sustained engagement strategy will be essential. This should involve internal and external communities, including university leadership, students, faculty, staff, alumni, as well as Indigenous communities, the City of Toronto, the TTC, and all other neighbours and external stakeholders. The engagement strategy should:

- align university and community needs and priorities;
- keep community stakeholders and partners abreast of all site-specific planning and design processes; and
- raise awareness, solicit stakeholder input, and resolve issues;
- build relationships and give appropriate voice to Indigenous peoples, as well as essential partners and neighbours.



## **RESPONSIVENESS**

In implementing this Vision and Strategy, the university and its development subsidiary must be adaptable to evolving market conditions, to emerging University strategic priorities, and a changing world.

### **Strategic Review and Revision**

This strategy will be reviewed and recalibrated as appropriate to adapt to changing market conditions and to evolutions in the university's larger strategic plans. This may include revisions in land-use intensity.

In helping to develop this strategy, an initial market sounding of the appetite for a variety of development opportunities was conducted. This included market, affordable and seniors' housing, as well as commercial, research and innovation facilities. Future, more-directly focused market soundings will enable the university to measure and react to market opportunities and to optimize mission value in individual transactions and over the long-term implementation of this strategy.

## **LAND RETENTION**

The university will retain ownership of lands, considering disposition only to achieve significant strategic benefit. Accordingly, it will favour transaction structures that may include long-term land leases that are fully paid up-front or that provide annual payments over the length of the terms, as well as partnership opportunities that might generate additional participation rents based on project success.

## MARKET AND SOCIAL ACUITY

In developing the land and, especially, in meeting, negotiating and/or working in partnership with private and public sector developers or collaborators, it is essential that the university can act in a timely way, make agreements in good faith and provide a consistent and focused approach to the development and management of the lands, from preliminary due diligence through project implementation. Accordingly, York University will need to ensure the organizational capacity is in place with the appropriate professional expertise and commercial orientation to support end-to-end planning and development management, and to represent the university's best interests. This may also require in-house expertise in technical due diligence, and land-use planning and development, as well as specialized expertise in priority areas such as engagement, affordable housing and community building.

### Phasing and Sequencing

It would be unrealistic to build out such an ambitious plan all at once. For example, housing developments must be timed to meet market demand. It also would be premature to commission some of the university-specific infrastructure before securing the necessary revenue through (again, for example) the construction and sale of market housing.

The following is a list of sequencing and phasing imperatives:

- Some development in the four neighbourhoods may occur concurrently in response to university needs and priorities, and emerging opportunities;
- Sequence projects to ensure key components (e.g., the main street in South Mall) are established early, as catalysts that attract further investment;
- Prioritize projects that provide a range of residential uses, thereby establishing the 24/7 population levels needed to support and expand the amenities and services essential in complete communities;
- Prioritize projects that best align University objectives with market demand;
- Stay responsive to evolving market conditions, especially highly desirable opportunities, and to changes in York's strategic priorities.



## CONCLUSION

York University has been a post-secondary success story in Toronto for more than 60 years, providing accessible education that people want and need, while developing graduate and research programs that stand with the best in the world. It is no accident that close to 60,000 people come to Keele Campus every day; York makes the trip worthwhile.

Governments at all levels have recognized the value of York's contribution and the importance of its stabilizing presence, investing heavily in transportation infrastructure and updating the planning regime. York has a responsibility to respond – to leverage its enhanced accessibility to build an even more powerful, productive, and creative Keele Campus, an educational beacon, an economic engine, and a social and community centre for the whole of northwest Toronto.

This Vision and Strategy charts the path to that goal. It describes the Keele Campus community of tomorrow: livable, walkable, sustainable, delightful; deeply engaged with its neighbours and partners; and, immeasurably stronger as an institution and community anchor.

The plan is defined by a resolute focus on York University's core academic mission – to seek and share knowledge for individual fulfillment and broad societal benefit. But the Vision also recognizes that the university's core purpose can only be achieved in cooperation and close engagement with a functional and healthy larger community. Working from the revitalized centre of the Harry W. Arthurs Common, it sets out four new neighbourhoods, each a community in its own right, but all contributing unique elements that will strengthen the university and the whole northwest quadrant.

This Vision and Strategy is a high-level document, setting out guiding principles and directions; the working plans for this complex program will come next. Successful implementation will require agility, responsiveness and the necessary people and resources to meet the market on its own terms, while remaining focused on advancing the university's academic mission. Careful planning, sequencing and, in some areas, upfront investment will also be needed to unlock the full academic, social, and economic value of the land.

The dividends, however, will accrue for generations. This is the opportunity for York University to make the very best of its educational assets, its lands, and other public investments to improve its internal functionality, expand its academic and research potential, and more closely engage and serve all of its communities – demonstrating the full university/community potential of Living Well Together.

