



PARKDALE COMMUNITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PCED)
PLANNING PROJECT

PARKDALE PLANNING STUDY

BUILDING A FOUNDATION
FOR DECENT WORK, SHARED
WEALTH BUILDING AND
EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IN
PARKDALE

SUMMARY OF REPORT

FEB 2016

Neighbourhood - wide

strategic planning

for

collaborative economic

development

in

Parkdale

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank a number of people and organizations for supporting the Parkdale Community Economic Development Planning project. Firstly, great thanks go to the Atkinson Foundation for making this project possible through leadership, inspiration, and financial support.

Special thanks also go to all community members, agency staff and community leaders who took the time to participate in interviews, surveys, focus groups and participatory planning workshops. The PCED project has been supported by existing collaborative initiatives supported by Metcalf Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Echo Foundation, and Catharine Donnelly Foundation. We are also grateful for Richard Maaraneu of the University of Toronto's Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership (NCRP) project and Heath Priston from the City of Toronto's Social Development Finance and Administration for providing data for the project.

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INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

How can we protect diversity, affordability and inclusivity in changing Parkdale, while also promoting equitable development for shared wealth building and decent work? The Parkdale Community Economic Development (PCED) Planning project has explored this question through extensive participatory planning, stakeholder engagement and community action research. Led by PARC, the PCED Planning project is an 18-month neighbourhood-wide planning initiative to create a Parkdale Neighbourhood Plan.

Parkdale is one of a few remaining downtown neighbourhoods in Toronto that are affordable and accessible to diverse community members. Over the past few decades, however, Parkdale has seen an increasing gap between North and South. North Parkdale has seen a growth of higher-income residents. In South Parkdale, around 90% of residents are renters. Close to 35 % live in poverty. Furthermore, for the past decade, the pace and degree of gentrification and displacement has intensified. For example, Parkdale has experienced the rapid influx of new restaurants and bars that cater to high-end clientele, the rise of corporate landlords that have pressured the affordability of high-rise rental apartments, and the ongoing loss of rooming houses.

What is at stake now is the future of Parkdale. Parkdale's diversity, affordability and inclusivity are increasingly at risk, and hinge on equitable outcomes of neighbourhood development and improvement. We know that change happens. But we also know that how change happens is not inevitable. Strategies and policy tools to guide neighbourhood change and build equitable local economies do exist. What is needed, then, is to explore how we can marshal those strategies, and work together to build a healthy, inclusive, and just neighbourhood. This is why this community planning initiative is vital and timely.

This summary report presents outcomes and findings from all community planning processes and research in the first stage of the PCED project (between January and December 2015). This report offers "a big picture" of the current state of Parkdale, and a comprehensive and relational analysis of community challenges and opportunities that are often discussed in silos. By bringing various areas of concerns and promising directions in Parkdale together, this report aims to develop a critical foundation that helps shape the development of a neighbourhood plan in the second phase of the project.

The full report will be available at <https://parkdalecommunityeconomies.wordpress.com/>



PARTICIPATORY PLANNING & RESEARCH METHODS

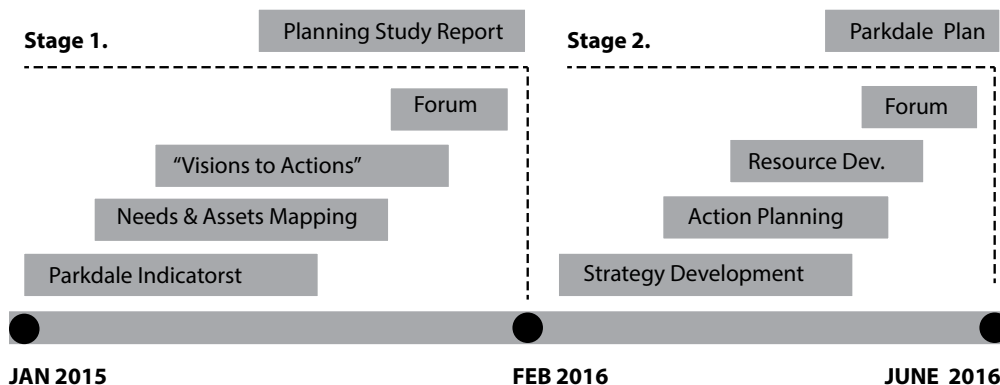
The PCED Planning project was divided into two stage.

The first stage (January – December 2015) focused on neighbourhood visioning for the future of Parkdale through community action research and extensive participatory planning processes. The PCED team organized three rounds of participatory planning workshops:

- 1) Parkdale wellbeing indicators development;
- 2) community needs and assets mapping; and
- 3) “visions to actions” planning.

These planning workshops served as focus group discussions with diverse community members. In addition, the project team conducted over 50 interviews, surveys with business owners, quantitative data analysis, and ethnographic engagement.

The second stage (January – June 2016) will use this report for further community organizing, stakeholder engagement, and action planning to develop a detailed work plan and resource development plan.





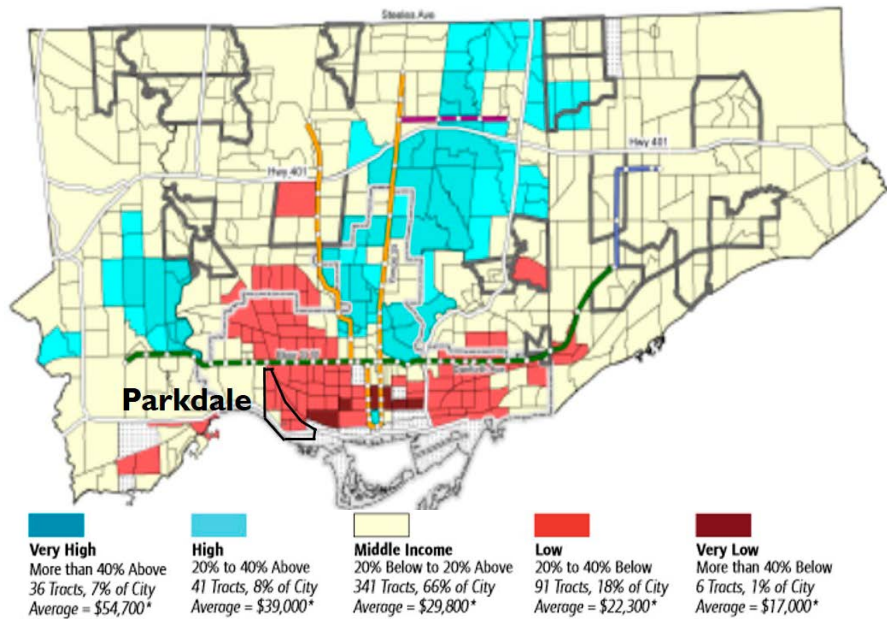
TODAY'S PARKDALE

GROWING INEQUALITY

In 1970, City of Toronto had many middle-income areas, particularly in inner-suburbs while low-income neighbourhoods concentrated in downtown. Both North and South Parkdale were relatively low-income neighbourhoods.

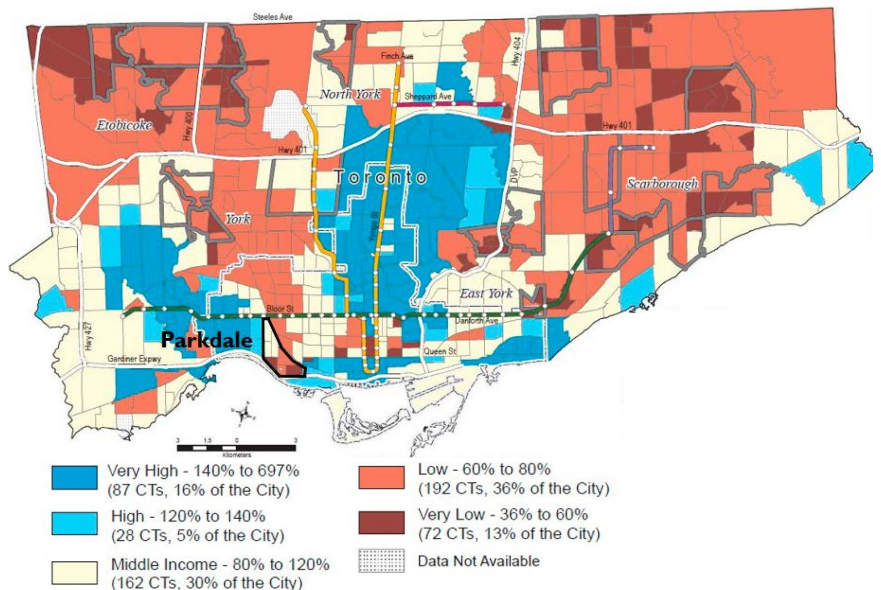
Over the past 40 years, considerable changes happened. In 2012, more low-income and very low-income areas concentrated in inner-suburbs. On the other hand, more high-income areas emerged in downtown and along the subway line. In Parkdale, North Parkdale became middle-income areas, while South Parkdale remained as low-income areas. It should be noted that two areas within South Parkdale became very low-income areas.

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL INCOME, CITY OF TORONTO, 1970

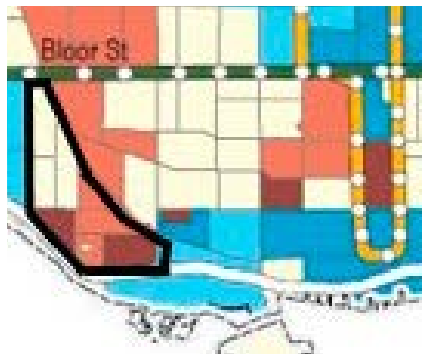


Hulchanski, D. (2010). The three cities within Toronto: Income polarization among Toronto's neighbourhoods, 1970-2005. Toronto: Cities Centre, University of Toronto

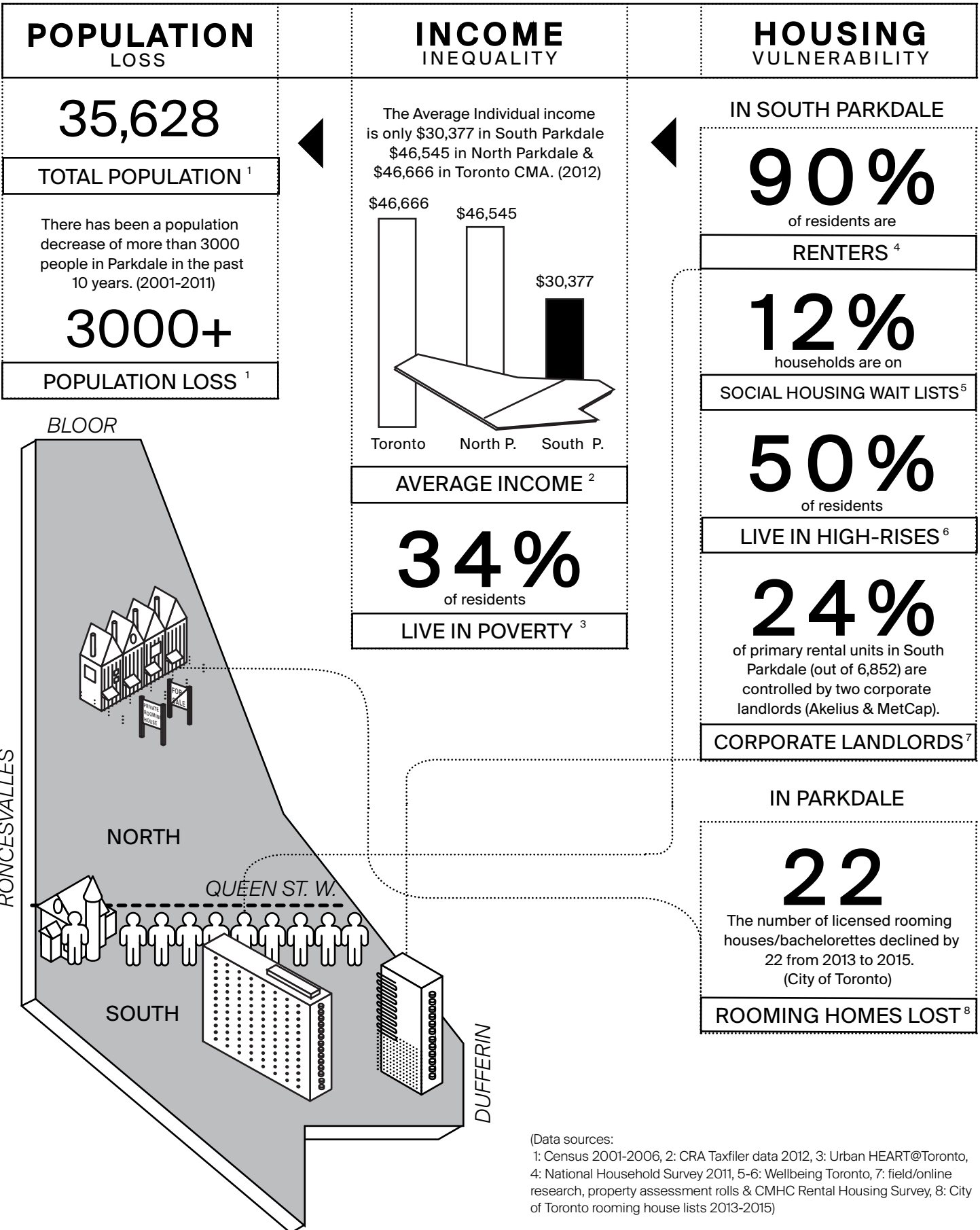
AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL INCOME, CITY OF TORONTO, 2012



Source: Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership 2015



PARKDALE TODAY: A SNAPSHOT



(Data sources:
1: Census 2001-2006, 2: CRA Taxfiler data 2012, 3: Urban HEART@Toronto, 4: National Household Survey 2011, 5-6: Wellbeing Toronto, 7: field/online research, property assessment rolls & CMHC Rental Housing Survey, 8: City of Toronto rooming house lists 2013-2015)

DISPLACEMENT PRESSURES

This figure shows the population change in Parkdale from 1996. From 2001, the total population decreased by around 3,000 (around 2,000 in South Parkdale). Two age groups in South Parkdale decreased: children (0-15 years) by +1,000 and working age adults (30-49 years old) by +1,000.

The data on people living in poverty and people on social assistance indicate the high socio-economic needs in South Parkdale. But when we pay attention to changes, some concern is raised. South Parkdale saw the decrease in these rates over time, when both North Parkdale and Toronto saw the increase

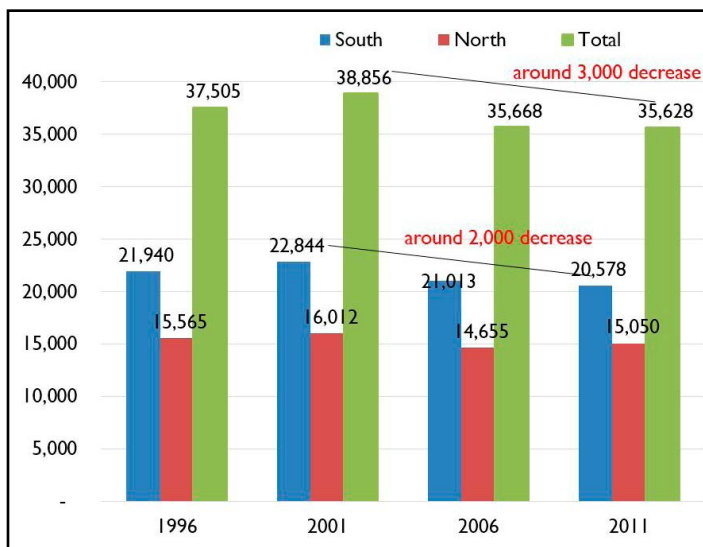
Close to 90 % of residents in South Parkdale are renters. Average rents are still lower than those of Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). However, the pace of rent increase is higher in South Parkdale. Housing is getting unaffordable.

Taken all together, when we think about the population decrease in South Parkdale, it may be reasonable to estimate that the decrease may be attributed to some degree – if not all – to mounting pressures of displacement of low-income and vulnerable community members.

What this review allows us to understand is two things. First is a trend of growing socio-spatial inequality in Toronto, one that has been shaped by economic restructuring and policy change. Second, these are the structural forces that have been shaping the local process of neighbourhood change in Parkdale.

Through community planning process, community members emphasized the four overarching values for Parkdale: **diversity, inclusion, affordability and equity**. Because of the current pressures of neighbourhood change, however, what is at stake is these values in Parkdale. A critical question for us is, how can we protect affordability, inclusion, and diversity in Parkdale while also promoting equitable development, decent work and shared wealth building?

POPULATION CHANGE 1996-2011



Source: Census 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011

OF PEOPLE BELOW POVERTY LINE

(PEOPLE LIVING BELOW THE AFTER-TAX LOW INCOME MEASURES)

	2005	2010
South Parkdale	37.1%	34.1%
North Parkdale	20.3%	21.1%

Data source: 2010 – Statistics Canada T1-Family File 2011 via Urban HEART @ Toronto; 2005 – Census 2006

OF PEOPLE ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

	2008		2012	
	#	% to total pop	#	% to total pop
South Parkdale	5,463	26.0%	4,473	21.1%
North Parkdale	2,028	13.8%	2,268	15.7%
City of Toronto	247,505	9.9%	261,058	10.0%

Data source: Toronto Employment & Social Services via Wellbeing Toronto

AVERAGE MONTHLY RENTS, 2004 - 14

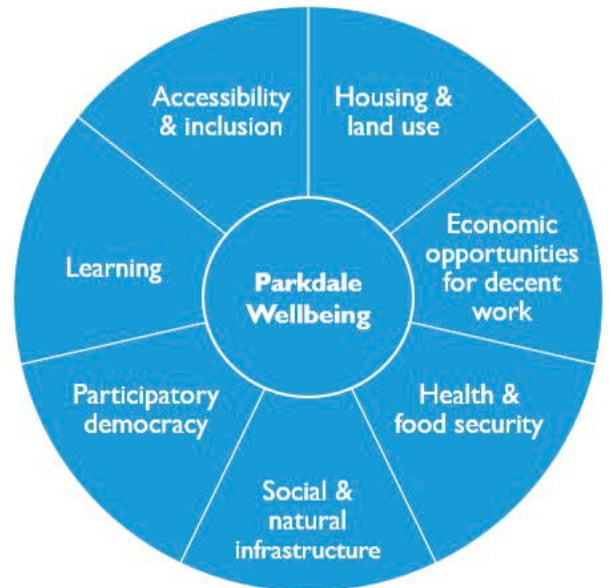
		2004	2008	2014	14 vs 04
Bachelor	South Parkdale	\$ 591	\$ 621	\$ 738	25%
	Toronto CMA	\$ 727	\$ 764	\$ 896	23%
1 bedroom	South Parkdale	\$ 760	\$ 823	\$ 945	24%
	Toronto CMA	\$ 886	\$ 927	\$ 1,067	20%
2 bedroom	South Parkdale	\$ 949	\$ 997	\$ 1,161	22%
	Toronto CMA	\$ 1,052	\$ 1,095	\$ 1,251	19%

Data source: CMHC Rental Market Survey via Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership at University of Toronto

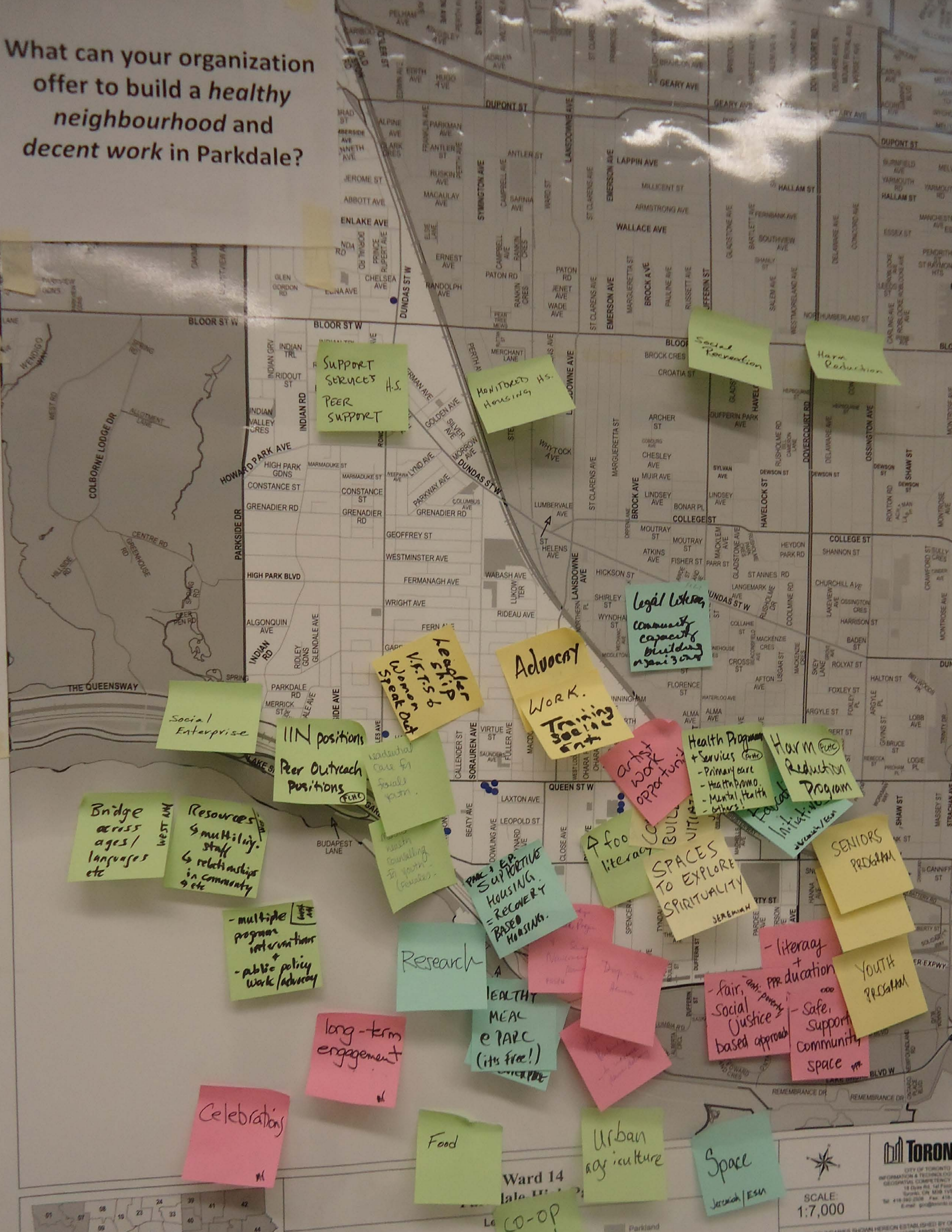
PARKDALE WELLBEING INDICATORS

What matters to the wellbeing of Parkdale? How do we know the local economy serves community needs? Based on the participatory workshops and research, the following 7 domains of Parkdale Neighbourhood Wellbeing Indicators (PNWI) were developed. PNWI will be useful in three regards:

1. Enable community residents and organizations to better understand neighbourhood and local economic conditions – both needs and assets – in Parkdale
2. Serve as an ongoing monitoring and tracking tool of neighbourhood change
3. Offer common information for diverse stakeholders and community members to open up a conversation to inform strategic directions for community action and policy options



What can your organization offer to build a healthy neighbourhood and decent work in Parkdale?



SUPPORT SERVICES H.S.
PEER SUPPORT

MONITORED H.S. HOUSING

Social Recreation

Harm Reduction

Social Enterprise

Keep it local
W.M.T.S. & Speak Out

Advocacy Work.
Training
Social Ent.

Legal Literacy
community capacity building
main 3000

11N positions
Peer Outreach positions

Artist work opportunities

Health Program + Services
- Primary care
- Mental Health
- others!

Harm Reduction Program
Harm Reduction Initiative

Bridge across ages/languages etc

Resources & multiling. staff & relationships in community & etc

- multiple program interventions
- public policy work/advocacy

Research

park & exp. SUPPLEMENTARY HOUSING = RECOVERY BASED HOUSING.

A food literacy CO-OP

SPACES TO EXPLORE SPIRITUALITY

SENIORS PROGRAM

long-term engagement

HEALTH MEAL ePARC (it's free!)

- fair, anti-poverty based approach
- Social Justice

- literacy + PR education
- Safe, Supportive Community space

YOUTH PROGRAM

Celebrations

Food

Urban agriculture

Space
Jewish/ESN

Ward 14
late 11

CO-OP

SCALE: 1:7,000

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KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS AND PROMISING DIRECTIONS

The PCED’s community visioning and research identified the following 7 areas for community action and policy options. It is important to note that while these areas are discussed separately in this report, they are interlinked and thus should be read not in isolation but in relation to each other. Equally important, the historical review of neighbourhood change in Parkdale suggests that the impact of political economic restructuring and local policy decisions have shaped the ways in which neighbourhood change in Parkdale has taken place over time. In other words, Parkdale’s neighbourhood change – poverty concentration, gentrification and displacement – are local manifestations of larger patterns of growing socio-spatial inequality in Toronto. This perspective directs us to understand neighbourhood issues and develop community-based strategies in relation to the systemic nature of these challenges.

How can Parkdale mobilize community assets, strength and opportunities to confront local and structural challenges? Opportunities and directions in the following seven areas are the point of departure for promoting decent work, community’s shared wealth generation, and equitable development in Parkdale.

- 1) Social infrastructure
- 2) Affordable housing and land use
- 3) Decent work and economic opportunities
- 4) Health and food security
- 5) Community financing
- 6) Participatory local democracy
- 7) Cultural development and learning

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

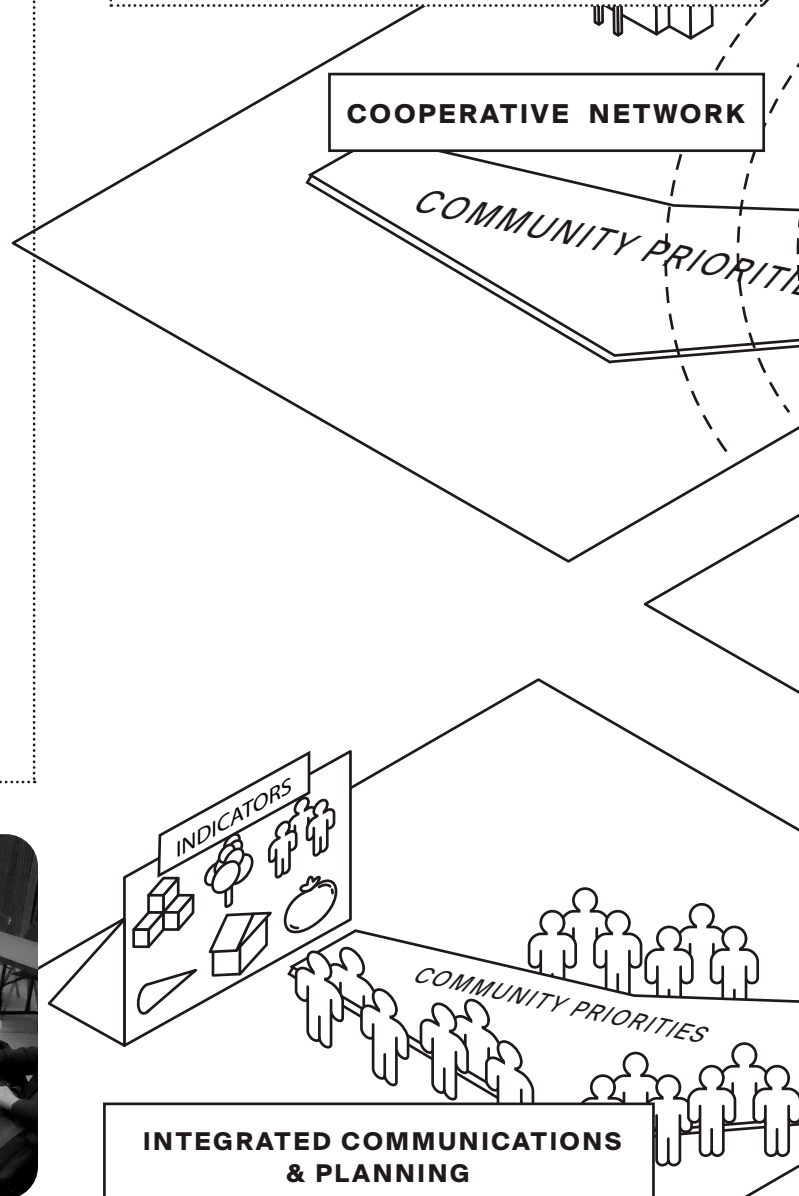
CONTEXT

Parkdale has a diversity of non-profit community organizations that offer various community supports and programs. One of the Parkdale's strengths is the concentration of diverse non-profit organizations. They constitute a strong social infrastructure that has contributed to keeping Parkdale inclusive and accessible while also helping mitigate displacement pressures. Parkdale's social infrastructure is also characterized by the culture of collaboration among community organizations. This strength is remarkable given the current context of the competitive funding climate. Nevertheless, community organizations face common challenges of organizational stability and financial sustainability. In addition, as redevelopment pressures increase in Parkdale, several organizations are uncertain whether they could stay in Parkdale due to the absence of secure leases.

Strengthening Parkdale's social infrastructure is critical for building an inclusive, mixed-income neighbourhood. To protect social infrastructure and prevent displacement is also a public health concern; many low-income and marginalized members with poor health and few resources are being pushed out from downtown to inner-suburban neighbourhoods with fewer social and health services. Following four directions are identified to deepen the existing collaboration, and build a more integrated social infrastructure to play a key role in promoting community-driven strategies.



NEEDS & ASSETS
<p>NEEDS/CHALLENGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational instability and administrative burdens that constrain partnership building • Lack of secure leases for their office space • Constrained capacity to undertake community (economic) development
<p>ASSETS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concentration and diversity of community organizations that provide essential supports • A culture of collaboration among organizations • Existing innovative community initiatives



VISION

Develop a sustainable and collaborative social infrastructure in Parkdale to enhance the overall wellbeing of community members and neighbourhood.

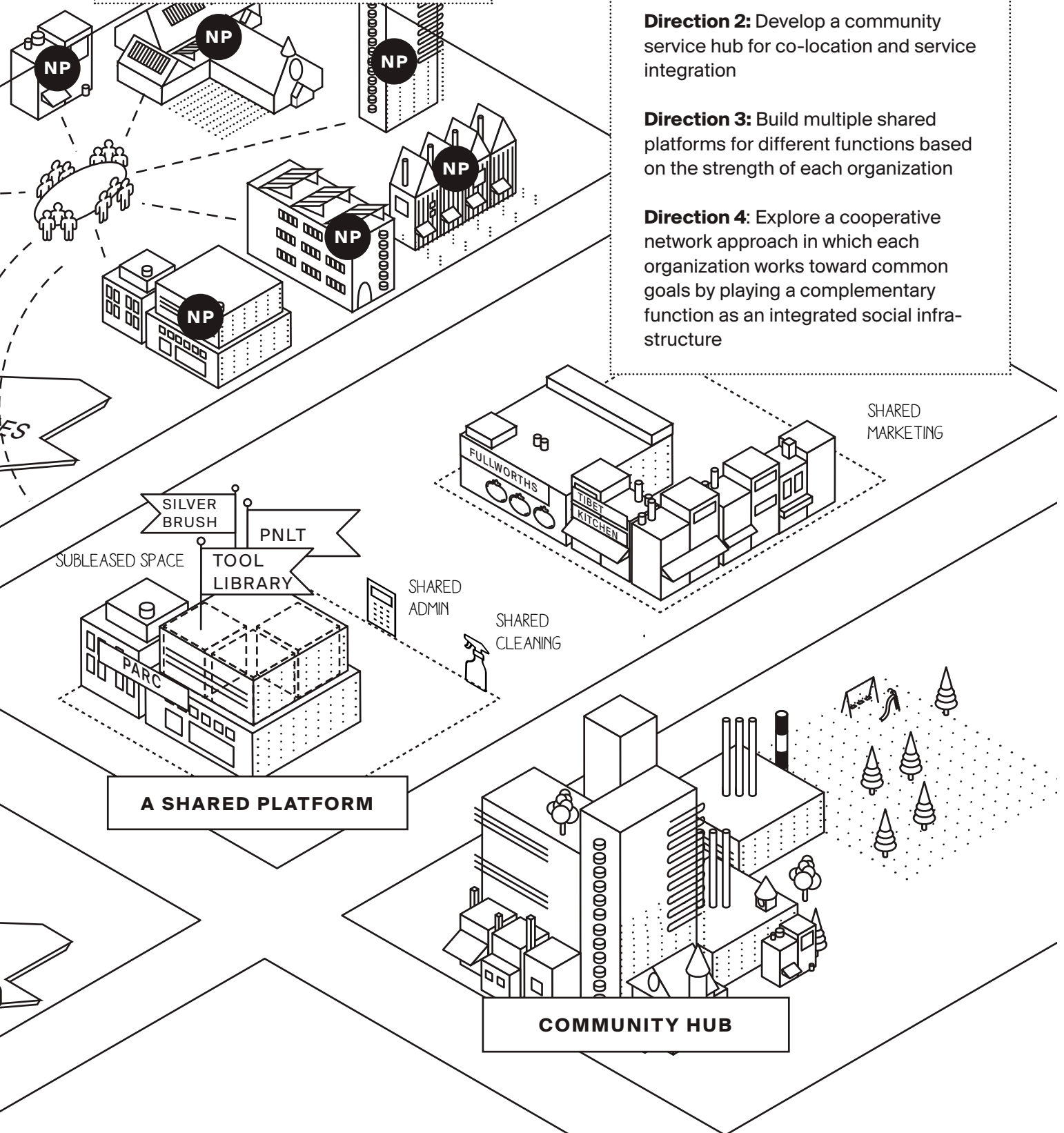
OPPORTUNITY & DIRECTIONS

Direction 1: Leverage the Parkdale Neighbourhood Wellbeing Indicators for integrated cross-organizational communication and planning

Direction 2: Develop a community service hub for co-location and service integration

Direction 3: Build multiple shared platforms for different functions based on the strength of each organization

Direction 4: Explore a cooperative network approach in which each organization works toward common goals by playing a complementary function as an integrated social infrastructure



AFFORDABLE HOUSING & LAND USE

CONTEXT

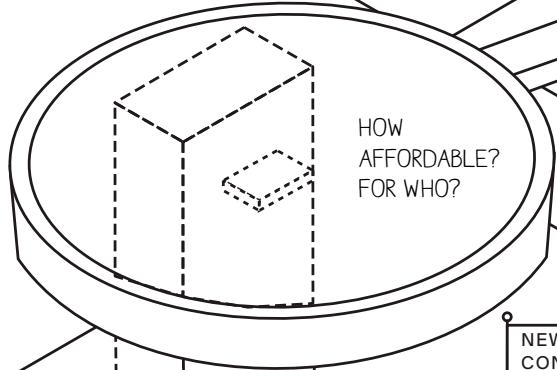
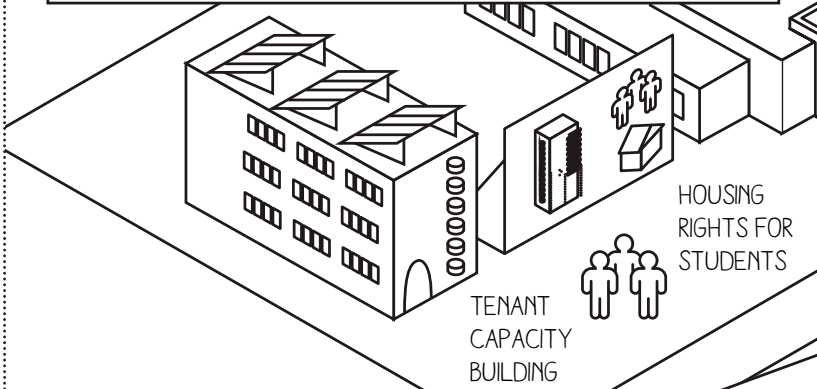
Parkdale has developed and retained a range of affordable housing options – private rental housing, rooming houses, supportive housing, cooperative housing and public housing. They are, however, increasingly at risk due to pressures from gentrification and real estate reinvestment. On a day-to-day basis, low-income, immigrant, and vulnerable community members face resulting housing insecurity and displacement pressures. In particular, pressures on the affordability of high-rise apartment buildings have increased as corporate landlords have attempted to implement above-guideline rent increases. The need for affordable housing is apparent.

Attention to land ownership and its use, rather than a sole focus on affordable housing, offers unique insights into ways to understand challenges in neighbourhood affordability and equitable development. Our research and community consultation reveal that local land use decision-making often fails to prioritize community needs, involves limited coordination with diverse stakeholders, and lacks transparency and accountability to residents. The recent redevelopment of a three storey building into a new single-storey LCBO site in Parkdale is an illustrative example.

In light of these challenges, directions for Parkdale foregrounds two broader objectives: 1) the democratization of local land use planning and 2) a tandem strategy for development without displacement that simultaneously promotes various initiatives and policy for preserving and strengthening affordable housing. Proposed directions should be also built on Parkdale’s unique assets such as strong community organizing capacity, the experience of various non-profit housing organizations, and the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, a community land trust that acquires and owns land for community benefits such as long-term affordable housing.

NEEDS & ASSETS
<p>NEEDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable, adequate and supportive housing • Ongoing loss of rooming houses • Increased vulnerability of high-rise affordable housing • Lack of transparent and democratic land use planning and information sharing
<p>ASSETS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diversity of affordable and social housing • Existing resources and expertise of non-profit housing organizations • Strong community activism and organizing capacity (e.g. Parkdale Organize) • Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust

PUBLIC EDUCATION ON HOUSING RIGHTS



NEW CONDO

EQUITY LENS FOR COMMUNITY REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

VISION

Preserve and increase affordable, adequate, and supportive housing options for all residents in Parkdale through community-led land use planning that promotes development without displacement

OPPORTUNITY & DIRECTIONS

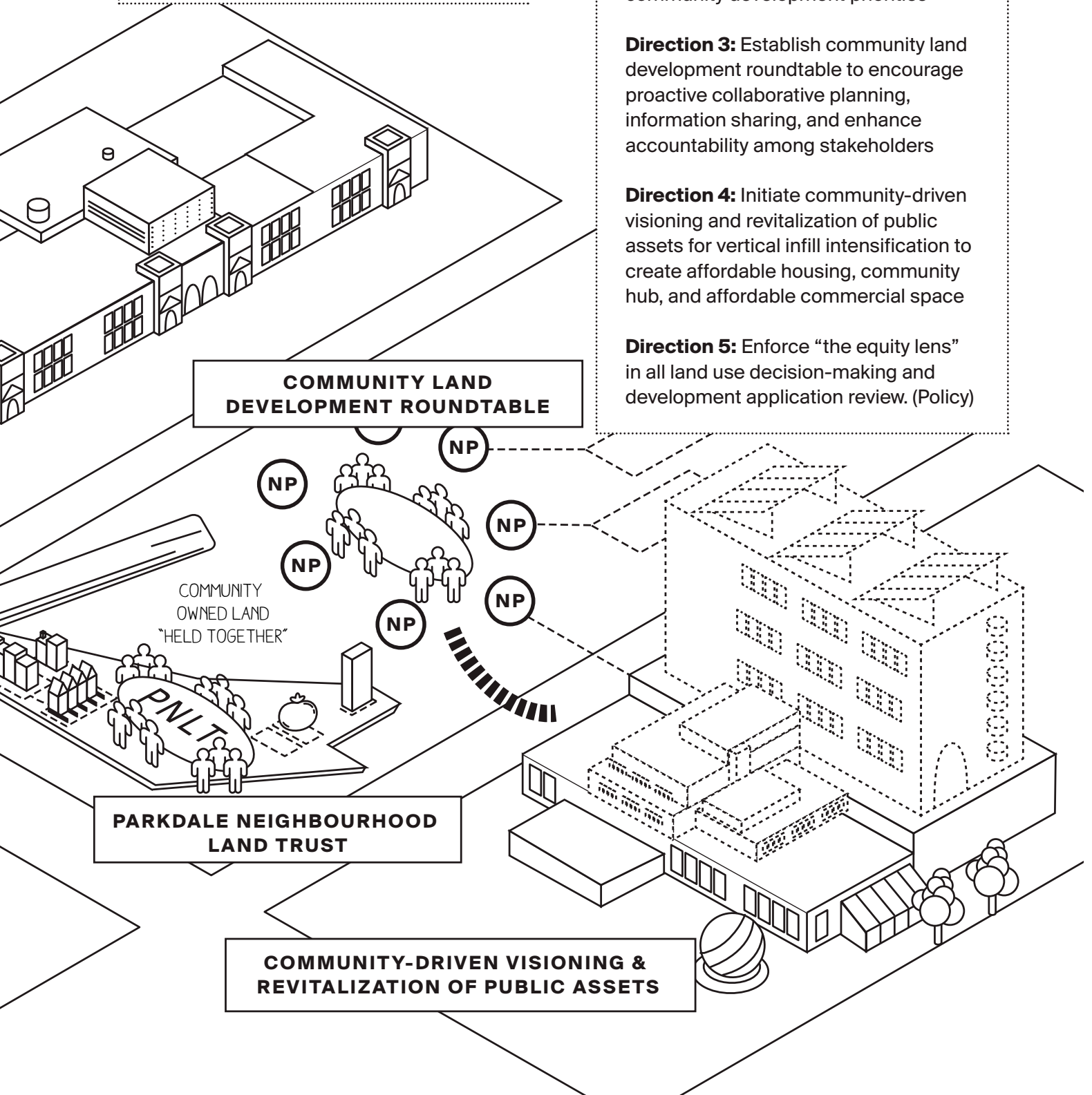
Direction 1: Promote public education on housing rights

Direction 2: Embed the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust into a neighbourhood vision for land use and community development priorities

Direction 3: Establish community land development roundtable to encourage proactive collaborative planning, information sharing, and enhance accountability among stakeholders

Direction 4: Initiate community-driven visioning and revitalization of public assets for vertical infill intensification to create affordable housing, community hub, and affordable commercial space

Direction 5: Enforce “the equity lens” in all land use decision-making and development application review. (Policy)

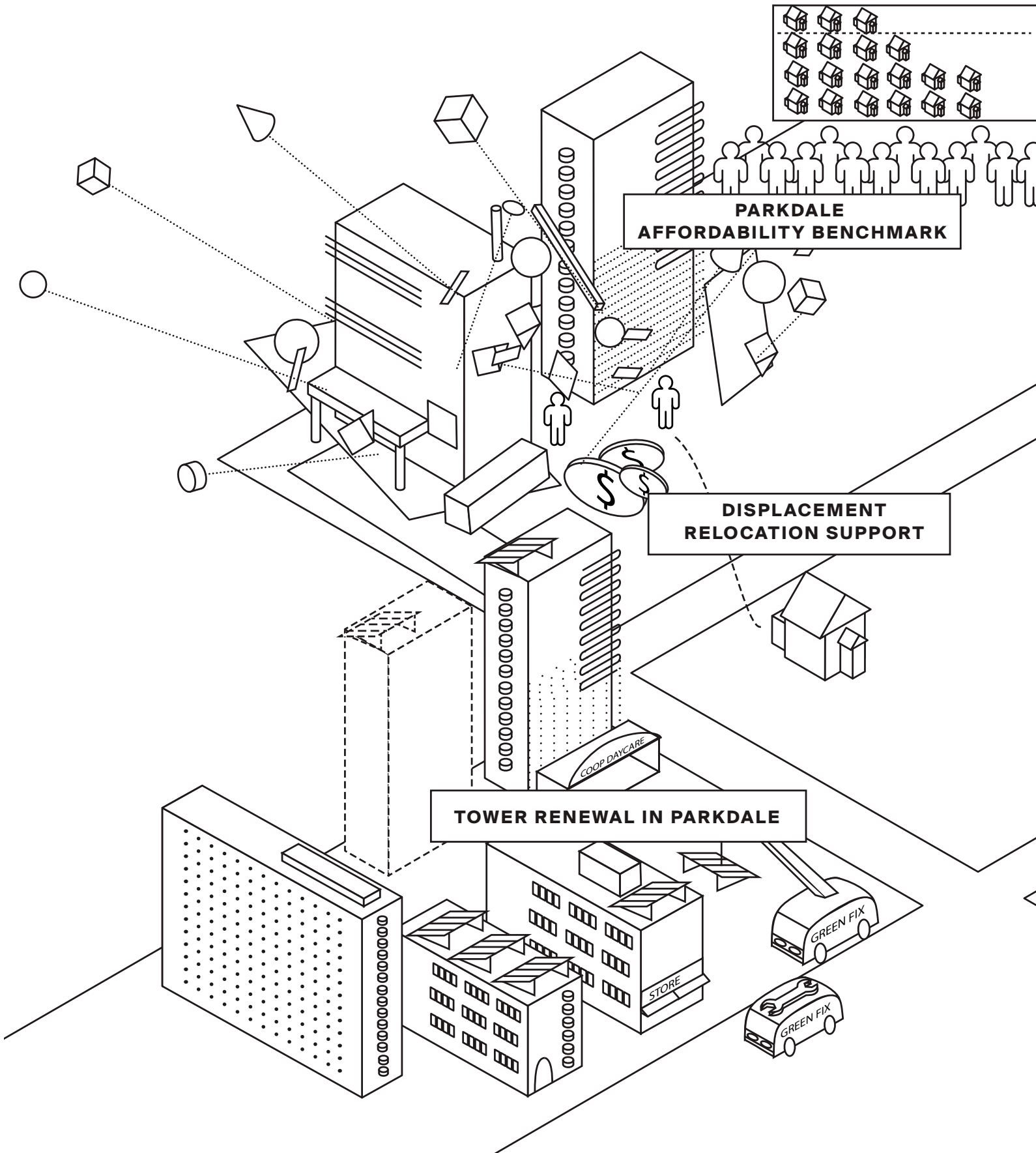


COMMUNITY LAND DEVELOPMENT ROUNDTABLE

PARKDALE NEIGHBOURHOOD LAND TRUST

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN VISIONING & REVITALIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & LAND USE (2)



OPPORTUNITY & DIRECTIONS

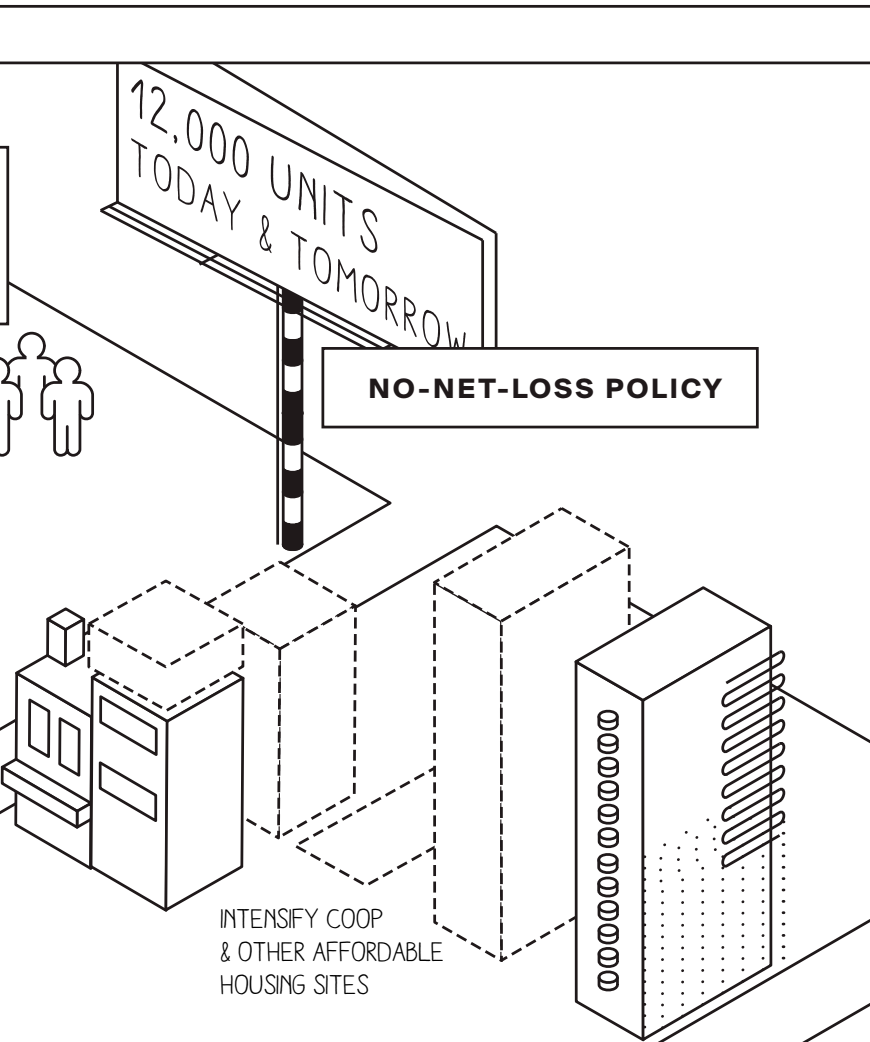
Direction 6: Strengthen relocation support and proactive response to mitigate impact of displacement (Policy)

Direction 7: Preserve and strengthen affordable housing through succession planning and intensification by proactively working with sympathetic local landlords and housing providers

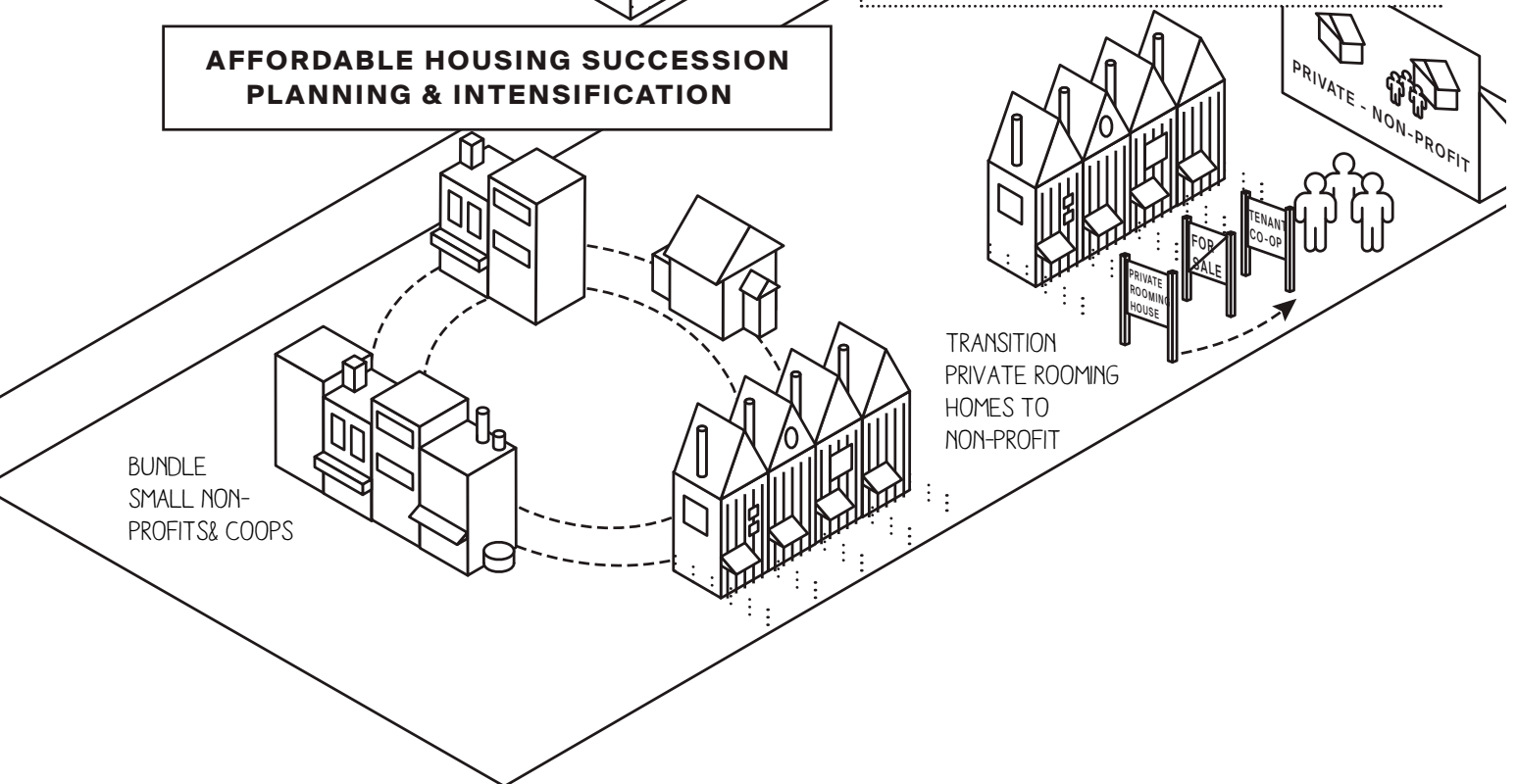
Direction 8: Create Parkdale affordability benchmark to keep track of changes in affordable housing, set goals for preservation of affordable housing and detect early signs of displacement pressures

Direction 9: Advocate a No-Net-Loss Policy for Parkdale to protect and maintain a current level of affordable housing (Policy)

Direction 10: Extend the Tower Renewal mandate to protect existing affordable high-rise apartment buildings (Policy)



AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUCCESSION PLANNING & INTENSIFICATION



DECENT WORK & INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

CONTEXT

Different challenges in accessing decent work are felt differently by diverse community members. People on social assistance face the limit of eligible employment income and the lack of supportive work environment; newcomer and immigrant members are being pushed into low-wage jobs due to unrecognized credentials and lack of Canadian experience; parents cannot afford to expensive child care services, which keeps them from taking work and training opportunities; and youth are hit hard by the disappearance of decent entry-level jobs that would support career advancement. A common challenge for decent work in Parkdale is the lack of supportive work opportunities that help people transition to better work and fulfill their personal aspirations.

The other strand of the decent work debate in Parkdale is a changing commercial space. Community members raised a concern about the loss of affordable commercial space, local-serving businesses, and local work opportunities. The recent City of Toronto's Parkdale Restaurant Study resulted in the bylaw that places the 25% cap on the percentage of restaurants and bars. While this bylaw is an innovative measure to control commercial mix, it could only address mix by function not by socio-economic and cultural diversity. Because commercial change in the neighbourhood is closely related to residential change, retaining affordable commercial space is critical for keeping Parkdale affordable and diverse.

While these challenges are systemic in nature and thus require structural reforms in labour market and city planning policy, it may be possible to remove these local barriers and to start to articulate a neighbourhood-based vision for decent work, one that could support a broader movement and policy change efforts. Parkdale possesses considerable local economic assets for building decent work at the neighbourhood level. A unique asset in Parkdale is the Co-op Cred program that addresses economic and food security challenges by offering supportive work placement opportunities for people in recovery from mental health experience and for newcomers; non-profit community organizations offer over 15 social enterprises and member employment programs in Parkdale. Our business survey identified 10% of the businesses have already promoted local hiring. One of the untapped community assets is large "anchor" institutions such as hospitals by repurposing and harnessing their considerable purchasing and hiring capacities to create community benefiting economic opportunities.

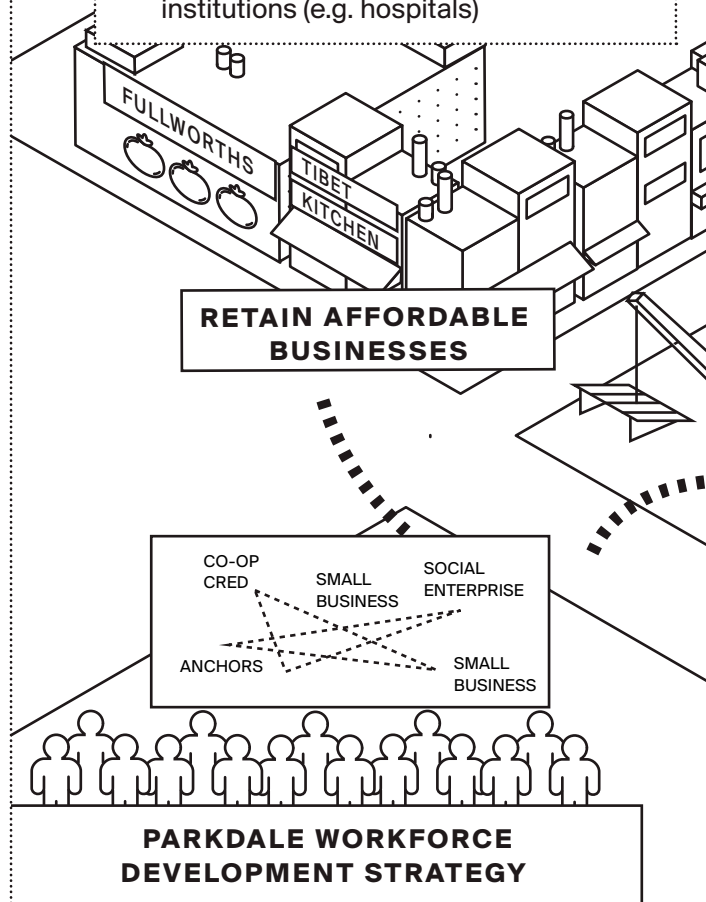
NEEDS & ASSETS

NEEDS / CHALLENGES:

- Interrelated challenges faced by diverse community members (e.g. social assistance program's earned income limits, unrecognized credentials, and child care)
- Disappearing decent entry-level work for youth
- Lack of supportive transition that helps lead to better work and fulfill personal aspirations
- Loss of local serving businesses and affordable commercial space

ASSETS :

- Supportive work opportunities through the Co-op Cred program, social enterprises, and non-profit organizations
- Sympathetic local businesses that hire locally
- Spending capacity of large anchor institutions (e.g. hospitals)



VISION

Increase community influence and ownership over economic resources to create decent work, establish pathways to inclusive economic opportunities, and keep money flowing back into the community.

OPPORTUNITY & DIRECTIONS

Direction 1: Develop a community skills inventory as a neighbourhood-based portal to match community members' skills and work aspirations with local work.

Direction 2: Integrate the equity lens into the priorities and practices of the Parkdale Village BIA.

Direction 3: Retain affordable businesses and commercial spaces to retain a commercial mix built on socio-economic and cultural diversity.

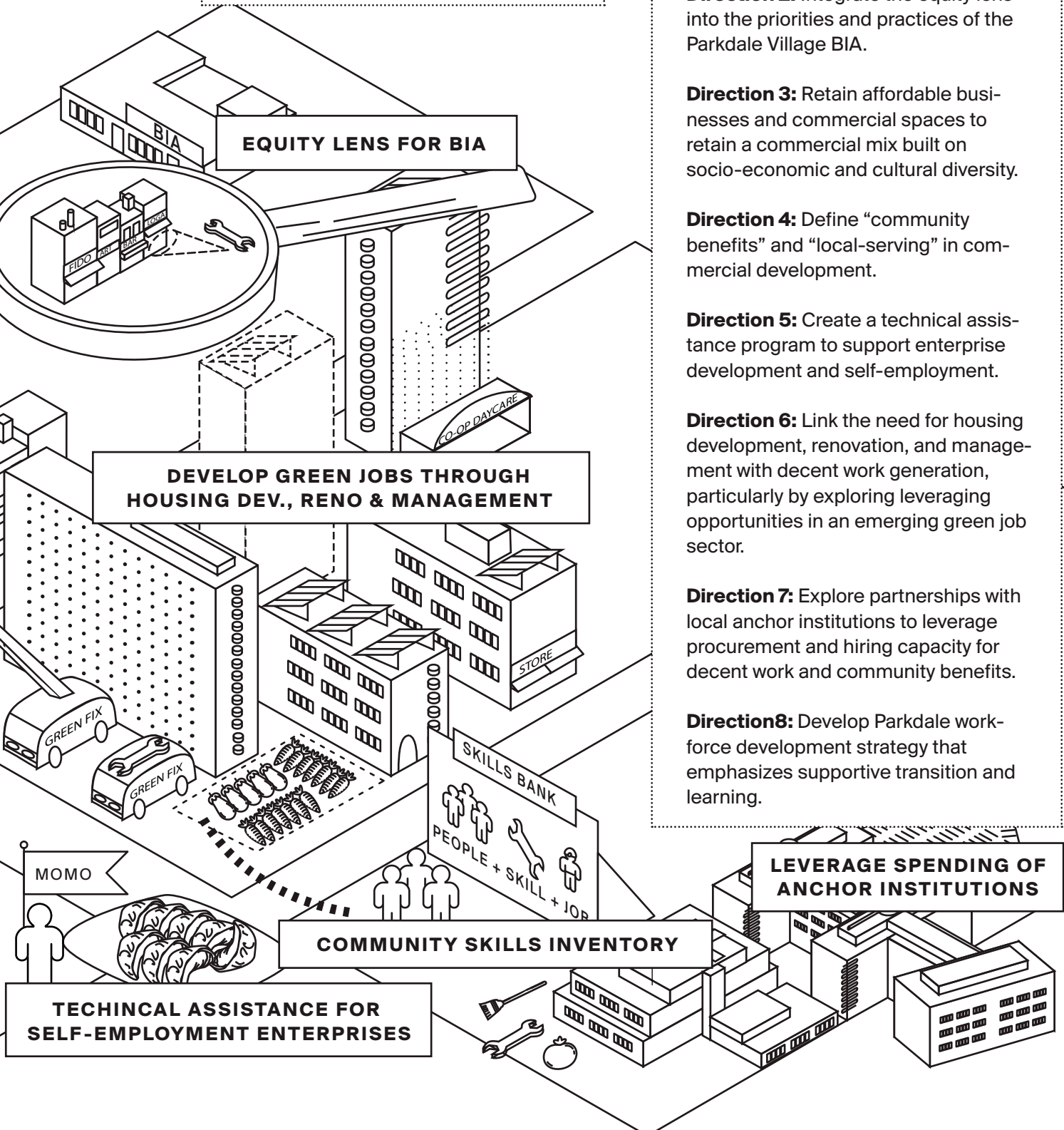
Direction 4: Define "community benefits" and "local-serving" in commercial development.

Direction 5: Create a technical assistance program to support enterprise development and self-employment.

Direction 6: Link the need for housing development, renovation, and management with decent work generation, particularly by exploring leveraging opportunities in an emerging green job sector.

Direction 7: Explore partnerships with local anchor institutions to leverage procurement and hiring capacity for decent work and community benefits.

Direction 8: Develop Parkdale workforce development strategy that emphasizes supportive transition and learning.



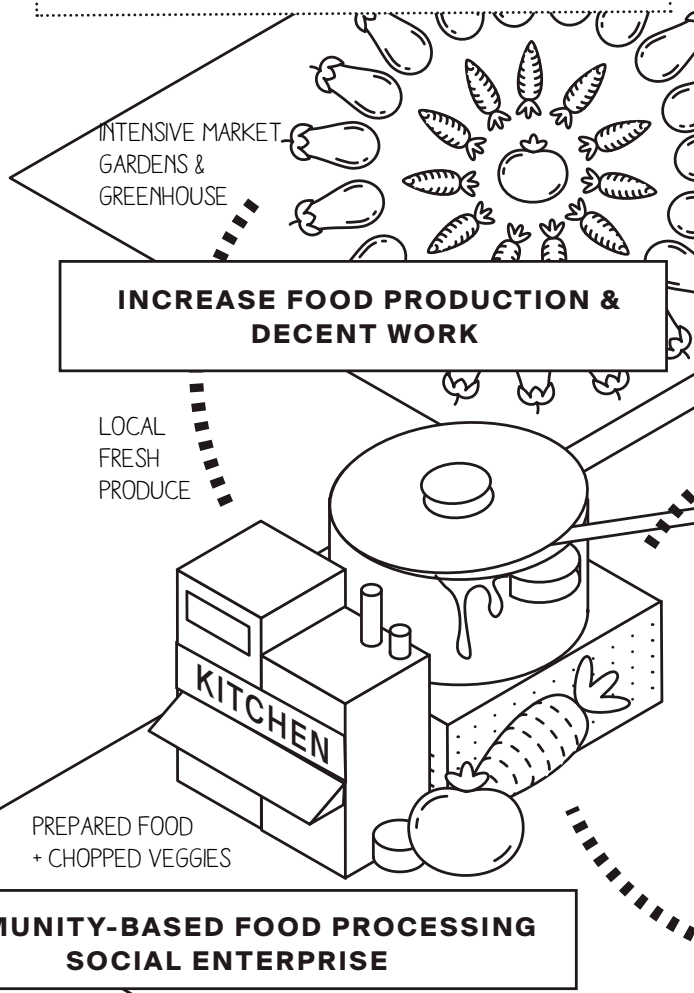
HEALTH & FOOD SECURITY

CONTEXT

Squeezed by increasing rents and stagnated incomes, low-income and immigrant community members often face complex food insecurity challenges. Unlike other “food desert” neighbourhoods (where healthy food options are scarce), Parkdale has a range of food options. In Parkdale, the issue is not the availability but the affordability of healthy food. In addition, around 20% of residents in Parkdale rely on social assistance programs. Their benefits are so low that they do not cover the basic costs for accessing nutritious food. These local issues are further compounded by the Toronto’s high reliance on imported food, which make food prices vulnerable to currency fluctuations and climate impacts. Access to healthy food is one of the social determinants of health. Compounding community food insecurity is of great concern in Parkdale that has one of the highest health needs in Toronto, such as premature death and mental health.

Over the past 5 years, Parkdale has seeded a range of community food security initiatives at different scales. These include the establishment of the Parkdale Food Network, the Good Food Market, the Co-op Cred program, and the Food Flow project. Building on these community assets, the following four interrelated directions have emerged in order to build an integrated local food economy. This integration would enable for wider partnerships with local businesses, non-profit organizations, anchor institutions, and local producers (e.g. the Soraren farmers’ market). This integration could deepen active interdependence of multiple community economic and food assets. What lies at the heart of this integration is a proposed community food hub. An immense opportunity has emerged: one of the local churches in Parkdale is interested in repurposing the church space into a community food hub.

NEEDS & ASSETS
<p>NEEDS / CHALLENGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The affordability of healthy food • High health needs (e.g. premature death and mental health) • Food literacy & skills for healthy cooking and shopping • Loss of affordable restaurants and food services <p>ASSETS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various community food security responses (food banks and community meal programs) • Existing collaboration via Parkdale Food Network • Co-op Cred program • Lessons & relationships built through Food Flow



VISION

Enhance affordable and equitable access to healthy food by building an integrated local food economy

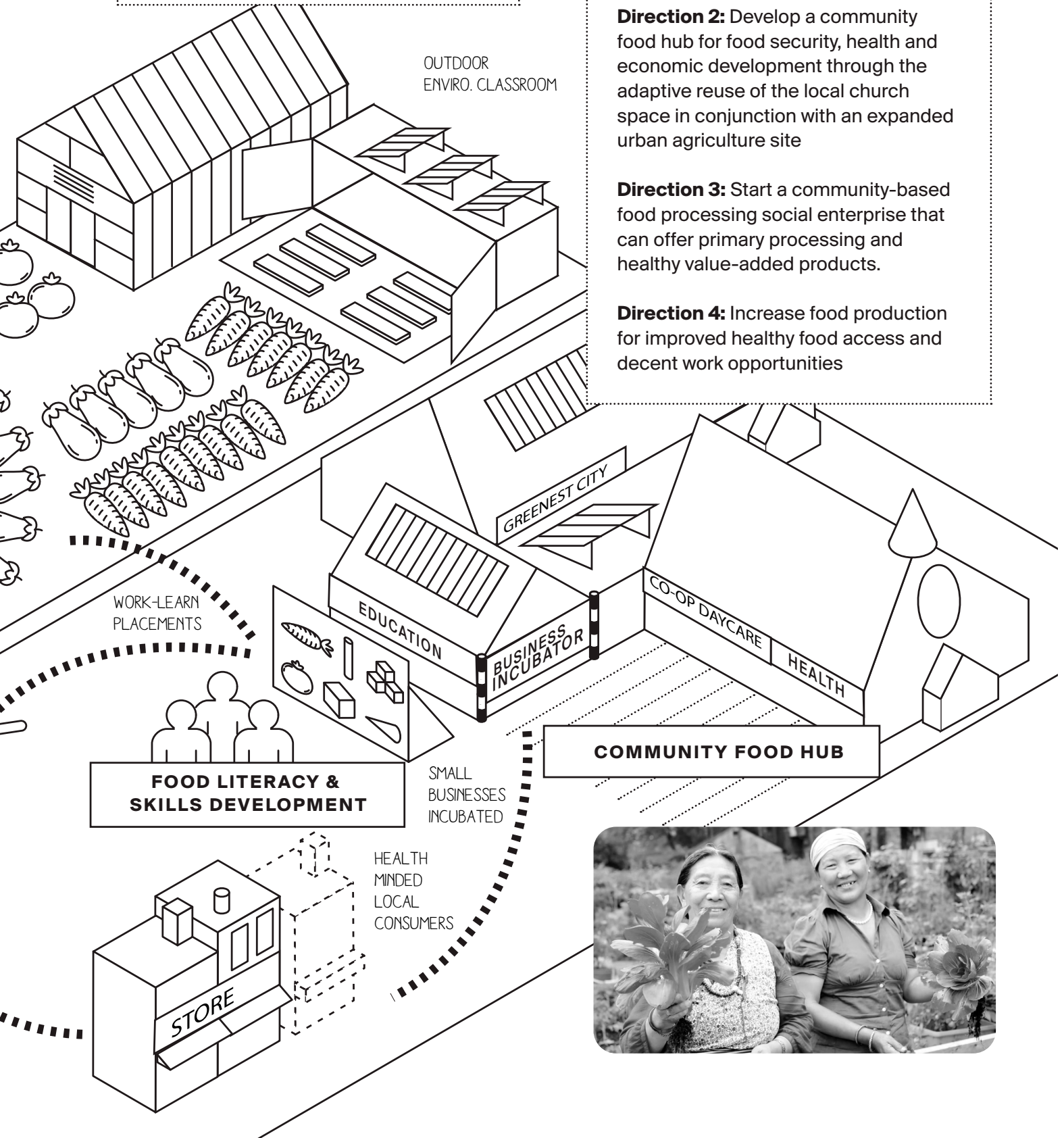
OPPORTUNITY & DIRECTIONS

Direction 1: Promote food literacy and skills development for healthy food provision

Direction 2: Develop a community food hub for food security, health and economic development through the adaptive reuse of the local church space in conjunction with an expanded urban agriculture site

Direction 3: Start a community-based food processing social enterprise that can offer primary processing and healthy value-added products.

Direction 4: Increase food production for improved healthy food access and decent work opportunities



COMMUNITY FINANCING

CONTEXT

An intricate challenge for community-based economic development is how to increase access to financial resources as well as influence the flow of financial capital. This challenge has become far more critical in Parkdale in light of a series of acquisitions of high-rise apartment buildings by a European corporate landlord that has leveraged financial capital through the Real Estate Investment Trust. This concern has prompted an exploration of community-based mechanisms to anchor financial resources locally. At the same time, the community planning process highlighted multiple needs for community-based financial mechanisms and institutions: financial exclusion due to the lack of supportive financial services for low-income members who end up relying on high-cost, fringe financial services; the lack of financial service options for local non-profit organizations that favour such options that emphasize community reinvestment and social values; and the need for alternative social financing options for community-led initiatives and projects.

Building on past and existing efforts in Parkdale as well as emerging innovations in social financing in Toronto, it is important to explore the possibility of cultivating access to community-oriented financial mechanisms. A timely opportunity has arisen, as two branches of Meridian Credit Union have opened recently in and nearby Parkdale. A range of legislative barriers remain for building a community-based investment platform – such as a regulation on accredited investors and Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) eligibility, ones that requires a further investigation.

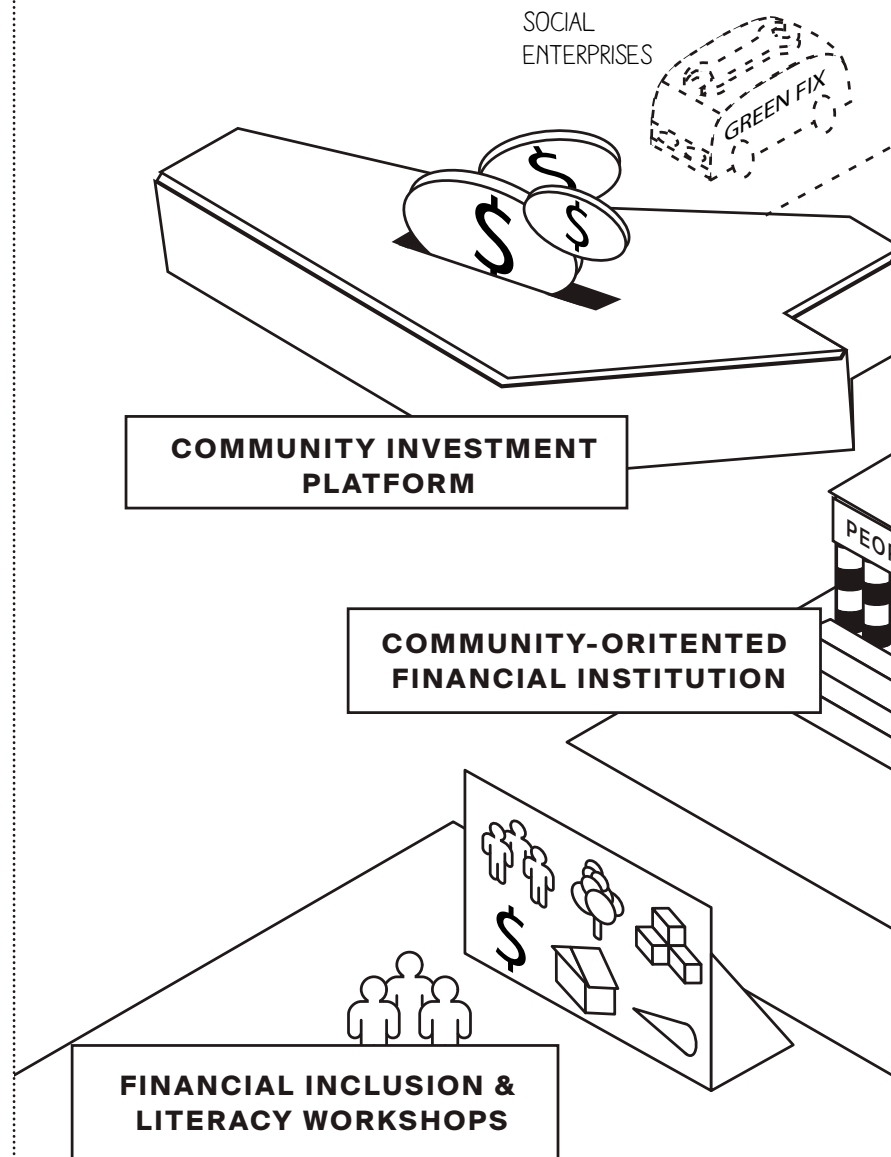
NEEDS & ASSETS

NEEDS / CHALLENGES:

- Lack of accessible financial services for low-income members who have few options but to use fringe financial services
- Financial institutions that prioritize community reinvestment
- The need for social financing options for community-led projects
- Long-term public investment in social infrastructure

ASSETS

- Financial literacy initiatives that promotes financial inclusion
- Experience in social financing (community bonds)
- Recent opening of two branches of a credit union



VISION

Improve financial literacy and encourage alternative investment platforms for community initiatives to retain, increase, and harness financial resources for community benefits in Parkdale

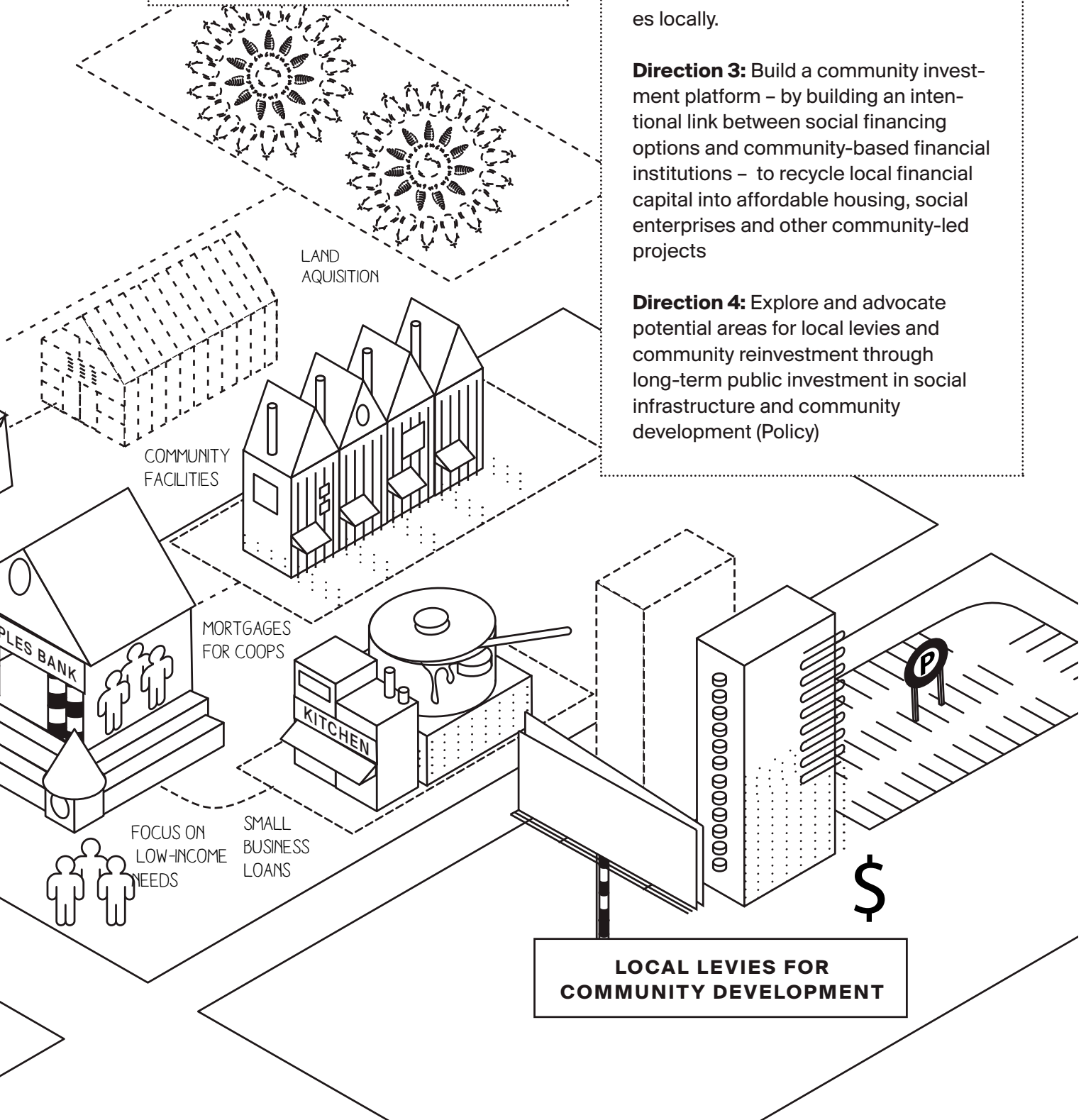
OPPORTUNITY & DIRECTIONS

Direction 1: Promote financial inclusion and literacy workshops

Direction 2: Develop and expand access to community-oriented financial institutions to address financial exclusion as well as retain financial resources locally.

Direction 3: Build a community investment platform – by building an intentional link between social financing options and community-based financial institutions – to recycle local financial capital into affordable housing, social enterprises and other community-led projects

Direction 4: Explore and advocate potential areas for local levies and community reinvestment through long-term public investment in social infrastructure and community development (Policy)



PARTICIPATORY LOCAL DEMOCRACY

CONTEXT

Building inclusive and equitable local economies requires a fair redistribution of wealth and benefits from neighbourhood improvement. What is equally important is an equitable redistribution of decision-making power. Community members stressed the importance of participatory planning and democratic participation in deciding how neighbourhood should develop and how local economic resources are allocated. Despite such an apparent importance, community members raised a concern about losing community control over the development of the neighbourhood. In addition to limited formal governance mechanisms (e.g. statutory public consultation), community members identified another critical barrier for democratic participation: a gap in knowledge about Parkdale. They mentioned that they do not know what is going on in Parkdale. They wanted to learn more about Parkdale but do not know where to go to find out more.

Therefore, there is the urgent need to renew local democratic mechanisms as well as to create pre-conditions for participation. The project has encountered a genuine desire from diverse community members for learning more about Parkdale so as to work together. Learning was seen as the first step for taking community action together. Community members hope to develop resident leadership capacity. They expressed the need to extend the exercise of democracy beyond participating in elections and statutory public consultations; they aspire to have more democratic control and influence to guide the development of the neighbourhood they live, work, and socialize. This aspiration is a crucial asset in Parkdale that needs to be nurtured.

Parkdale has a range of existing community assets that can contribute to realizing the community aspiration, such as strong community activism, various neighbourhood-wide networks, and learning programs. Some community organizations have developed an organizational governance structure that emphasizes the voice and decision-making power of community members. For example, by leveraging its democratic governance and neighbourhood-wide membership structure, Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust is building its capacity to act as a vehicle that fosters community-led participatory planning. The following four directions can harness these existing initiatives to promote greater local democracy in Parkdale.

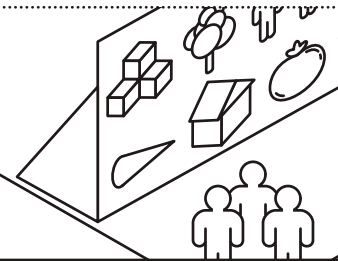
NEEDS & ASSETS

NEEDS & CHALLENGES:

- Losing local community control over neighbourhood development
- Limited participation and degree of local decision making in statutory public consultation
- A gap in knowledge about Parkdale
- Lack of youth representation

ASSETS:

- Community members' strong desire to be involved in community initiatives
- Community networks, residents' groups, and community organizations'
- Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust's democratic governance structure
- A number of learning and education activities



STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RESIDENT LEADERSHIP



VISION

Develop capacity and leadership to ensure participatory local decision making

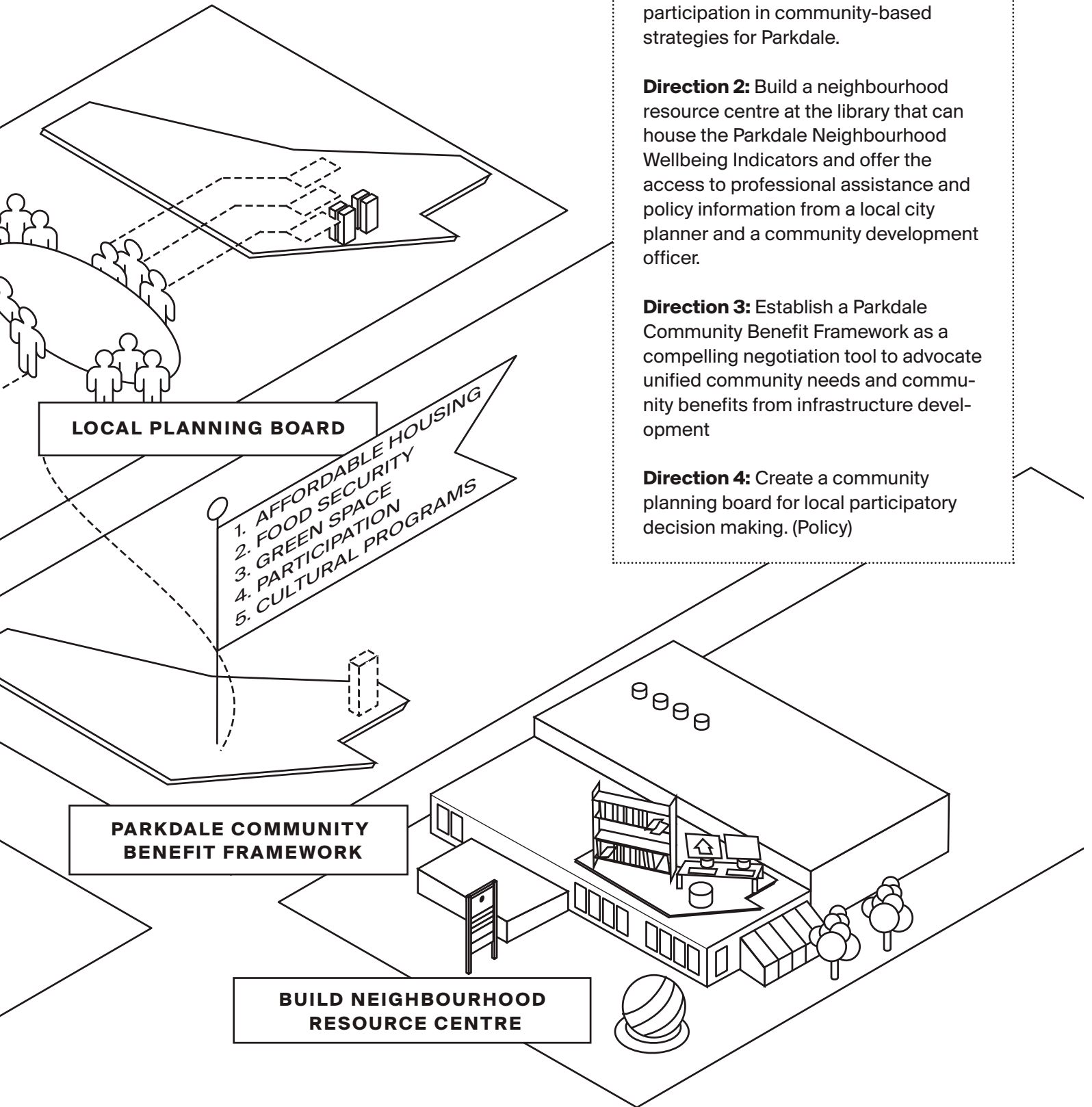
OPPORTUNITY & DIRECTIONS

Direction 1: Strengthen community resident leadership and popular education to foster an experiential learning approach and foreground resident participation in community-based strategies for Parkdale.

Direction 2: Build a neighbourhood resource centre at the library that can house the Parkdale Neighbourhood Wellbeing Indicators and offer the access to professional assistance and policy information from a local city planner and a community development officer.

Direction 3: Establish a Parkdale Community Benefit Framework as a compelling negotiation tool to advocate unified community needs and community benefits from infrastructure development

Direction 4: Create a community planning board for local participatory decision making. (Policy)



CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

CONTEXT

Cross-cultural learning is a basis of building an inclusive and diverse neighbourhood. Diversity is one of the core values for Parkdale that community members pointed out. Parkdale is a home to socio-economically and culturally diverse community members. Although they live in the same neighbourhood, community members noted that there are few opportunities for interaction and mutual learning among different community groups. The lack of interaction, however, does not mean the lack of interest. Indeed, diverse community members expressed their strong desire for learning differences, supporting each other, and building a common ground to work together. Community cultural development can offer an important first step to create such a common ground. Parkdale has a range of cultural and art programs as well as community-based artists. For example, the Making Room Community Arts has been working in Parkdale to create a more inclusive space and a point of encounters among diverse community members.

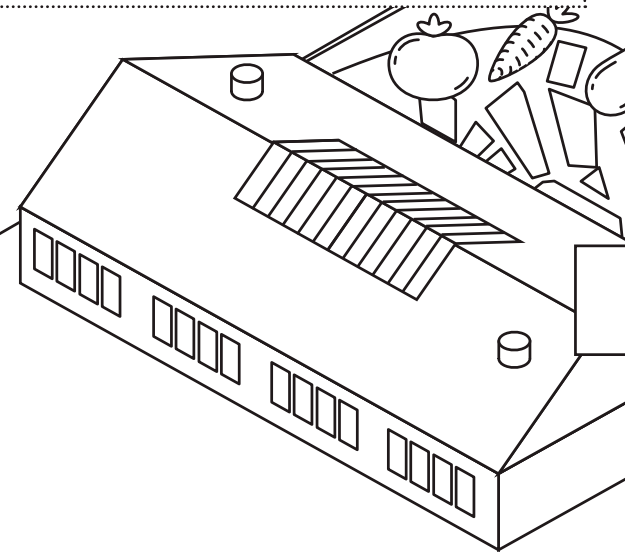
NEEDS & ASSETS

NEEDS / CHALLENGES

- Lack of interaction and mutual learning among diverse community members
- A changing sense of social and community space as the neighbourhood changes
- Lack of affordable cultural and art production space to celebrate cultural diversity
- Language barriers to communicate and share cultural heritages

ASSETS

- Socio-economic and cultural diversity in Parkdale
- Strong desires for mutual learning and support among diverse communities
- Existing art programs and organizations (e.g. Making Room)



VISION

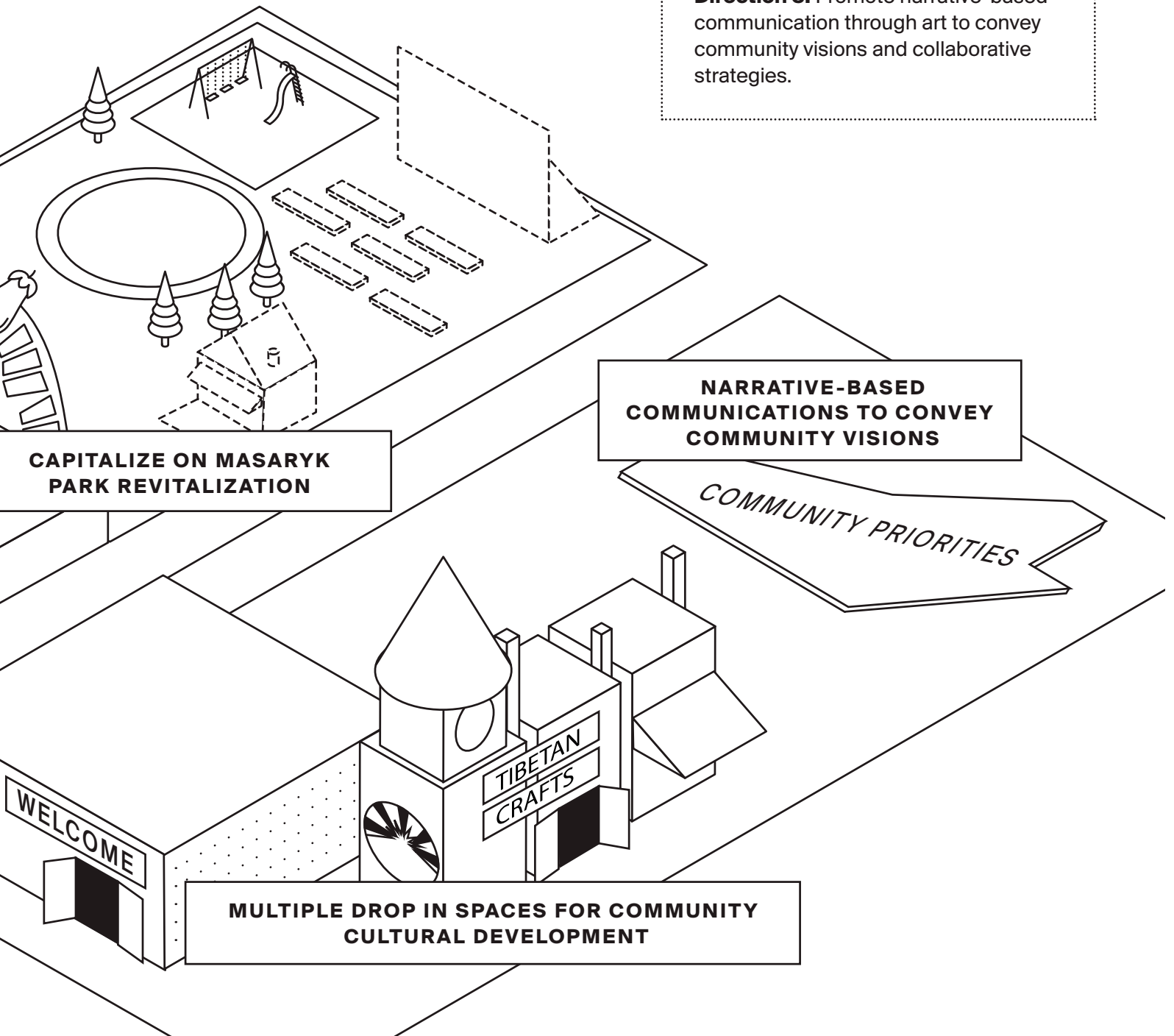
Encourage cultural and artistic activities that create accessible and well-coming ways of connecting people of different backgrounds for mutual dialogue and a shared sense of community among diverse members.

OPPORTUNITY & DIRECTIONS

Direction 1: Harness the proposed Masaryk Park revitalization opportunity to promote cultural activities in public space.

Direction 2: Create multiple drop-in spaces for cultural and art production such as Tibetan members' shoe and carpet making.

Direction 3: Promote narrative-based communication through art to convey community visions and collaborative strategies.



CAPITALIZE ON MASARYK PARK REVITALIZATION

NARRATIVE-BASED COMMUNICATIONS TO CONVEY COMMUNITY VISIONS

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

MULTIPLE DROP IN SPACES FOR COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

ATKINSON

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