



planning the year-round city

1UP Toronto 2024 Conference Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1: About 1UP Youth City Builders	3
2: Conference Snapshot	4
3: 1UP School Chapters	5
4: Design Jam	10
5: Participating Schools	22
6: Sponsors	23

1

ABOUT 1UP YOUTH CITY BUILDERS



1UP Youth City Builders

1UP Youth City Builders is a youth leadership program that brings together secondary school students across Ontario to celebrate and incubate city building ideas. The 2024 conference theme was **Thrive: Planning the Year-Round City.**

Thrive represents dialogues between youth and city builders about how indoor and outdoor public spaces might bring joy, wellbeing and happiness to everyone of all ages, all year round.

The Conference explored how all people could thrive with a meanwhile use for the Downsview Airport Lands, with a special consideration of accessibility, all season planning, and wellbeing of diverse communities.



2 CONFERENCE SNAPSHOT

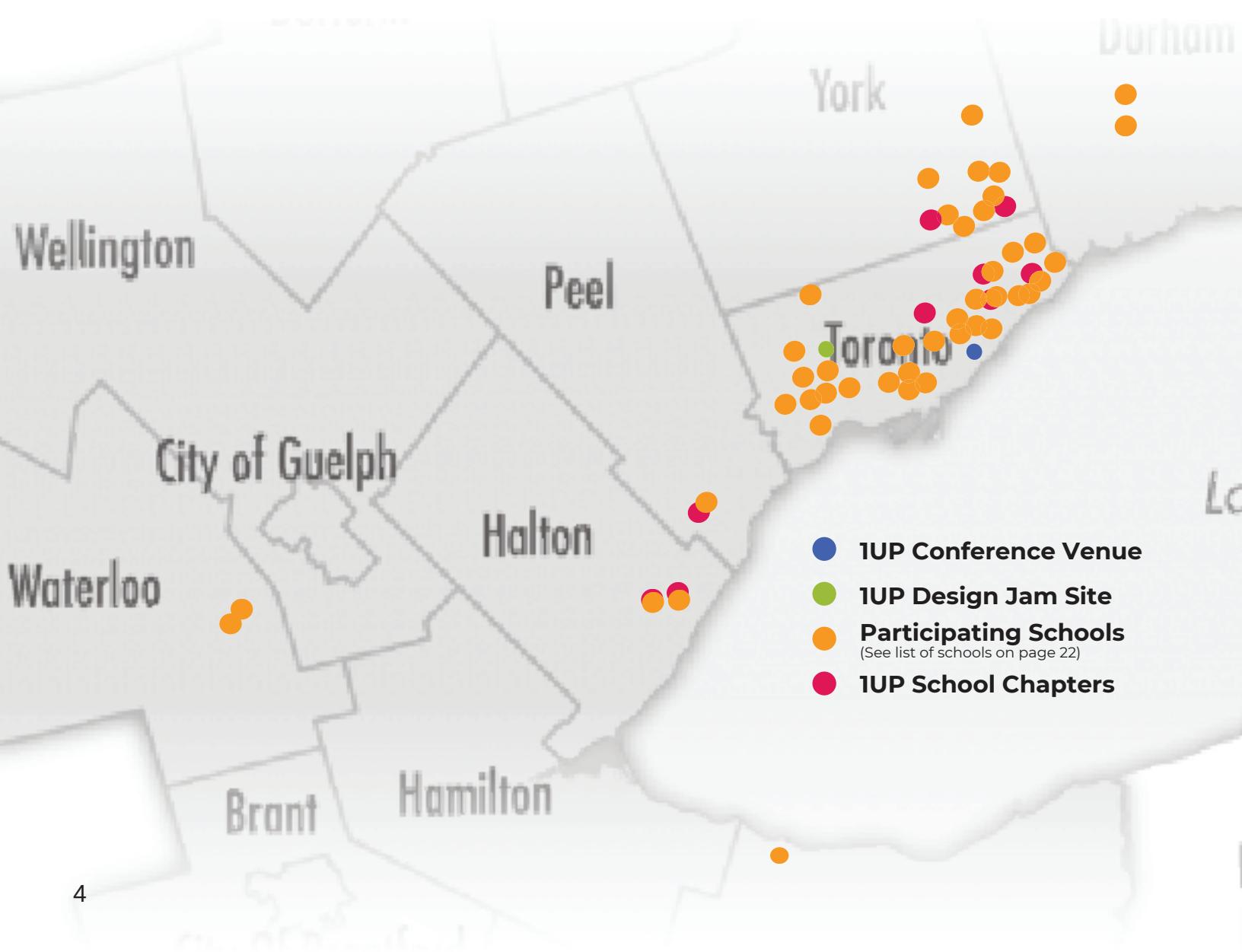
104 STUDENTS

45 HIGH SCHOOLS

13 MUNICIPALITIES

9 1UP SCHOOL CHAPTERS

2 DAY 1UP CONFERENCE



3 1UP SCHOOL CHAPTERS

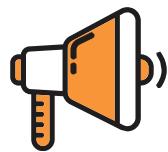
In the 2023-2024 school year, student leaders from four high schools took on the challenge to become 1UP Fellows. They led their school chapters to create and implement community design-build projects to address a specific issue that they identified in their communities.



Design solutions to improve a public space in a neighbourhood

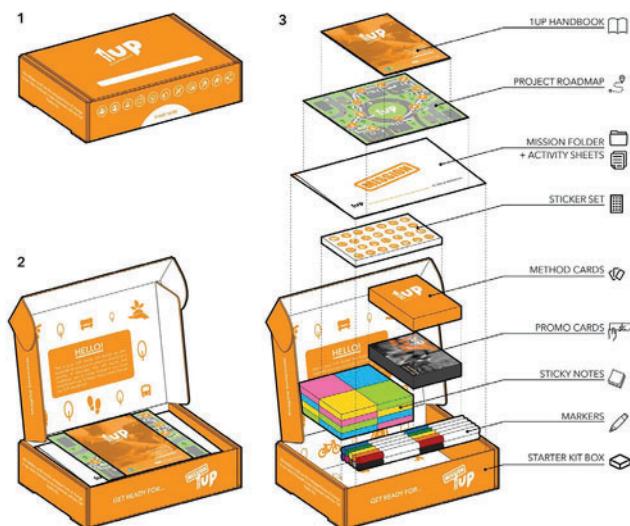


Build prototypes to test the school chapter's ideas and get feedback from real users



Pitch the chapter's project at the 1UP Toronto Conference to maximize reach and impact

Each school chapter was provided with a 1UP Starter Kit, a mentor, and a \$200 project stipend to kick start their project. While their work continues until the end of the school year, the 1UP Fellows presented project updates at the 1UP Toronto 2024 Conference to inspire others to take on the challenge in the new school year.



The **1UP Starter Kit** is a free toolkit provided to each school chapter to help start their project.

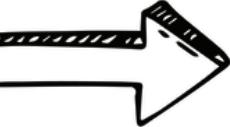
Agincourt Collegiate Institute

Fellow: Bi Lin Wang

Mentor: Reka Sivarajah

“How might we create a safe and welcoming courtyard that will connect our community?”

A common issue within the school is the neglected and hazardous courtyard located in the middle of the school community. After conducting surveys among students and their mentors, alongside visiting another school to assess the viability of their concept, the IUP school chapter came up with a plan to transform this space. Their vision entails repurposing the courtyard into a vibrant, secure, and multifunctional space. The proposal outlines a three-phase approach to gradually revitalize the courtyard: installing planters, a barrier around the exposed electrical box, and leveled pathways, reallocating existing benches, and implementing more seating options.



Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute

Fellows: Angelina Bai & Ivy Liu

Mentor: Peter Marshall

“How might we improve outdoor space at our school to encourage outdoor engagement for students?”

Building upon the surveys conducted on students last year and their subsequent site visit analysis, the IUP school chapter initially proposed the implementation of an outdoor dome tent study space to enhance students' access to fresh air, thereby improving their mental and physical well-being. This year, they have presented an updated plan, which addresses the same issue in four distinct phases: the installation of picnic tackles, sunshades, a platform, and ultimately the dome structure. This phased approach enables them to swiftly address the challenge faced by students without the need to navigate lengthy approval processes and bear the significant maintenance costs associated with dome installation.



Crescent School

Fellow: Andy Song & Arqish Minhas

Mentor: Matthew Graystone

“How might we reduce transportation time for all Bayview users caused by traffic congestion that is exacerbated by Crescent pickup/dropoff?”

A common problem within the school is the traffic congestion along Bayview Avenue, particularly during pickup and dropoff times at Crescent. After conducting a thorough site visit and analyzing existing policies and regulations, the IUP school chapter devised a solution to alleviate this problem. Their plan involves incentivising active travel and carpooling through rewards, installing roadside signs to inform other Bayview users about dedicated turn-in lanes for Crescent attendees, and redesigning the pickup/dropoff area within the school premises. They specifically presented their proposed solutions addressing both the demand and supply aspects of the issue.



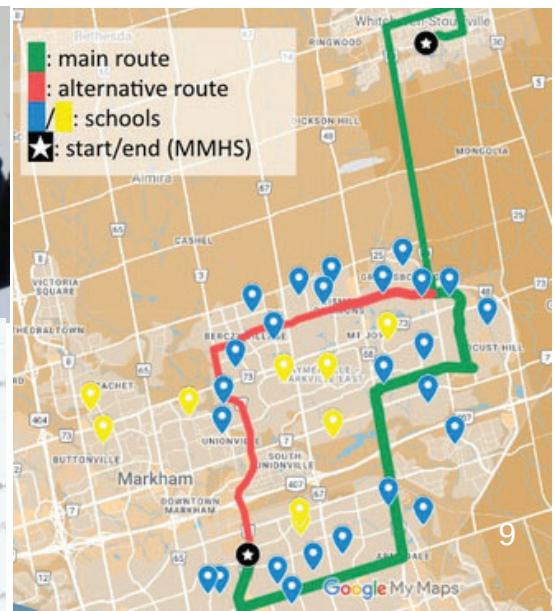
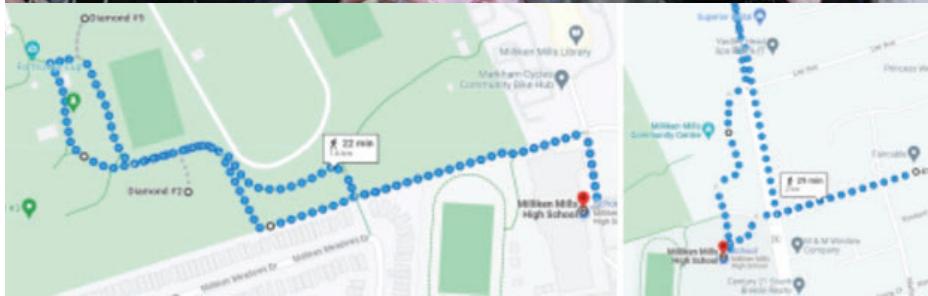
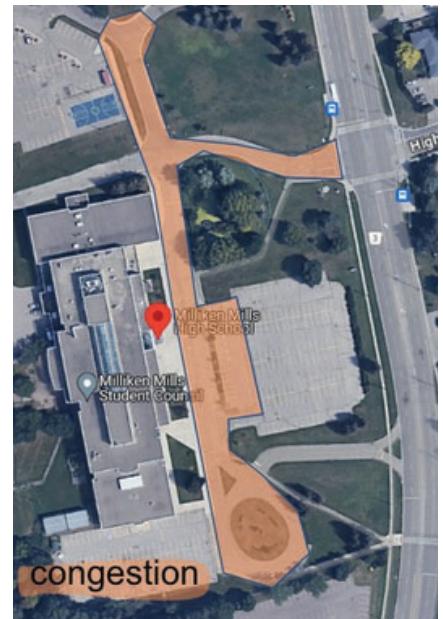
Milliken Mills High School

Fellows: Amy He

Mentor: Cassandra Alves

“How might we lessen the carbon footprint caused by commuting to school while improving the commute for students coming from far?”

By gathering insights from students regarding their commuting experiences, the 1UP school chapter discovered a prevalent dissatisfaction stemming from the poor and unreliable public transportation, leading to a reliance on personal vehicles and exacerbating traffic congestion during peak hours. To solve this issue, they proposed the development of an app called Milliken Connect, where parents can connect each other to form carpooling groups. This innovative solution seeks to enhance the commute for students travelling from distant locations, promote sustainable commuting alternatives, and further reduce dependence on individual vehicles.



4 1UP CONFERENCE DESIGN JAM

The 1UP Design Jam is a 4-hour student design competition for real-life urban challenges. Students at the conference were assigned into teams of four to six, to tackle a case challenge provided by our Design Jam partner, Northcrest Developments. Each team was guided by facilitators and had access to a Design Jam Partner representative in the room available for consultation on the case challenges. Each team was tasked to design one of four groups of personas provided in the case challenge.

The desired outcomes of the 1UP Design Jam were:



To develop greater empathy and curiosity in youth of current challenges in our communities.



To create imaginative youth-led solutions for our partner to consider implementing or incorporating.



To apply a user-centered approach to solve real-world community challenges.



Design Thinking Model

The IUP Design Jam took inspiration from the Design Thinking model, which is a creative, human-centred approach to problem-solving and innovation. The model follows several steps:

Empathize

Understand the place, people and problem.

Define

Identify a specific challenge to address within a greater issue.

Ideate

Brainstorm possible solutions.

Prototype

Build and test a physical model of a solution.

Pitch

Present the solution to others for feedback.





DESIGN JAM PARTNER: NORTHCREST DEVELOPMENTS

Northcrest

Northcrest Developments

In 2018, Public Sector Pension Investments (PSP) – one of Canada's largest pension investment managers – purchased the 370-acre Downsview Airport Lands in North York from Bombardier Aerospace. They then established Northcrest Developments to transform the soon-to-be-former airfield into a series of vibrant neighbourhoods.

Community Runway

With several years ahead before development begins, Northcrest is undertaking a "Meanwhile Use Strategy", imagining how an abandoned airport could be turned into a hub of culture and gathering through arts, recreation, food, and play. This placemaking work prior to development will reconnect Toronto to an iconic and central site that has been closed to the public for decades, while creating the soul of the future neighbourhoods long before construction begins.

A central facet of this Meanwhile Use Strategy is The Community Runway. Situated alongside a stretch of runway that is 40 m wide and 500 m long, Northcrest is imagining the Community Runway as a new Toronto public space filled with arts and culture, vendors and maker-spaces, and the city's biggest open-air play space with recreational activities that could only happen at Downsview because of the large stretch of unobstructed pavement that the runway allows.

We're Featured:

Global News at 6 Toronto



<https://globalnews.ca/news/10388155/downsview-airport-lands-design-jam-new-ideas/>

Toronto Star



» **TORONTO STAR** «

https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/these-teens-have-ideas-on-how-the-former-downsview-airport-can-be-reimagined-and-they/article_5c6bfe02-ea20-11ee-ae89-4316522eb037.html

Spacing



<https://spacing.ca/toronto/2024/04/18/youth-design-jam-for-downsview/>

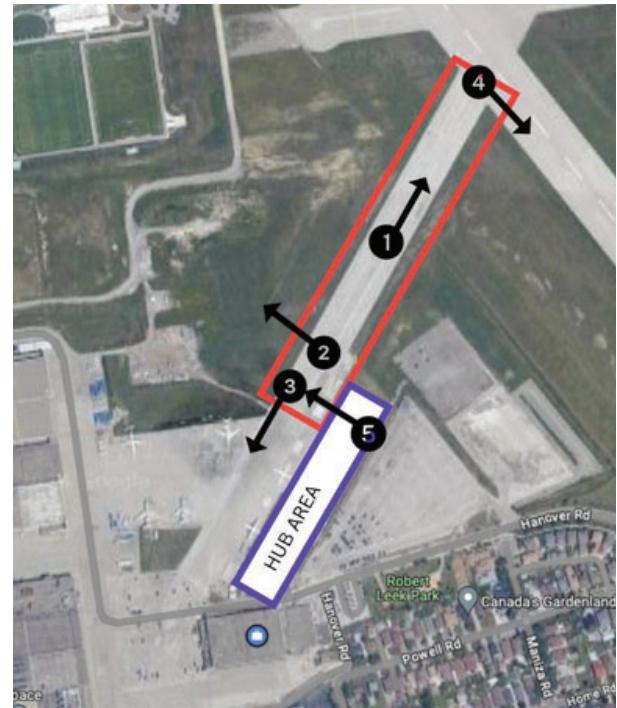
Design Jam Challenge:

How might we create an open air play space on the runway that inspires the public and creates an attraction for the widest possible audience?

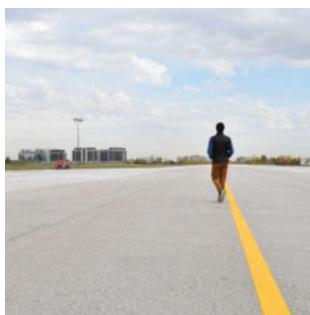


The Site: Downsview Airport

Adjacent to the open-air space will be a hub for vendors (food and beverage, artisans, micro-retail), an Indigenous discovery garden, sports fields, washrooms, and an indoor gathering space for performances and dining. As such, these functions should not be duplicated in the open-air play space. The open-air play space is intended to be the site's main attraction, accessed free-of-charge and drawing people through unique programming and bring-your-own recreation activities that could not happen anywhere except a wide, linear paved area without risk of interaction with vehicles.



Typical Community Runway Site Conditions



Focus Area 1



Focus Area 2



Focus Area 3



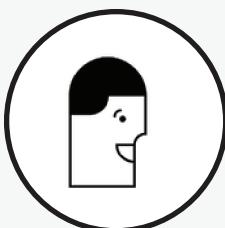
Entranceway View

DESIGN JAM PERSONAS

GROUP 1 PERSONAS



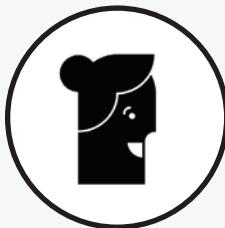
ALANA is a 74-year-old resident of the close-knit Ancaster community alongside her husband, Mitchell. Alana's roots trace back to Italy, and as a second-generation immigrant, she values the cultural connection to her heritage. A culinary enthusiast, Alana weaves the flavours of Italy into her Toronto life, sourcing ingredients from her backyard garden. She loves to host large gatherings for her growing family – including seven grandchildren – especially after attending church on Sundays. Alana and Mitchell's routine involves daily walks through the surrounding community. In the winter, Alana seeks solace in the aisles of Yorkdale Mall, though she notes its increasing congestion over the years. In the summer, she enjoys leisurely walks through her local neighbourhood. While Alana has heard about the upcoming Downsview development, she envisions it as a future construction site, potentially inaccessible for her enjoyment. Yet, her curiosity is piqued, and she remains open to discovering new aspects of Toronto that may add a layer of richness to her well-lived life – especially alongside her family. As an explorer of life's offerings, Alana is open to the creative possibilities that the Downsview Airport Lands might present through their activations, even if it challenges her initial assumptions.



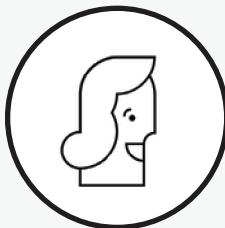
CHRIS is a 16-year-old student at Downsview Secondary School who has strong ties to the community, growing up alongside Downsview Park with his Portuguese family. His passion for skateboarding serves as both a source of joy and a practical means of navigating the neighbourhood's streets, despite the frustration of limited skate park availability in the area and throughout Toronto. This past summer, Chris delved into a role at the City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry & Recreation department as a summer student. The experience not only provided valuable work insights but also deepened his appreciation for the outdoors. Growing up close to Downsview Park has nurtured Chris's love for parks and nature, influencing his perspective and sparking interest in landscape architecture programs as he contemplates his university options. As Chris navigates the college application process and considers the prospect of moving away, maintaining a strong connection to the area remains a top priority. The experiences of growing up have not only enriched his love for the outdoors but have also instilled in him a desire to contribute to and shape the landscape of the community he proudly calls home. In the future, Chris aspires to play a role in enhancing the spaces that have been integral to his formative years, contributing to the continued vibrancy of his community.

DESIGN JAM PERSONAS

GROUP 2 PERSONAS



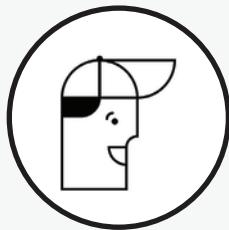
MEG is an 8-year-old from the Philippines who moved to Canada just two years ago with her parents, Asha and Aytakin. She currently attends Derrydown Public School and is in several extracurricular activities including dance and art. While a native Tagalog speaker, she's enthusiastically learning English, quickly picking up the language. Meg's parents are passionate about her remaining deeply connected to her Filipino roots but also eager for her to explore and learn more about Canadian culture. Her parents harbor ambitious dreams for her future in Canada, fostering a supportive environment that allows her to embrace both her cultural heritage and the opportunities of her new home. Though Meg is very shy and introverted, she flourishes in organized activities that provide structure and bring her out of her shell. Given her parents' busy work schedules, Meg often finds herself at activities on her own. Nevertheless, her parents do their best to find ways to help her socialize and connect with others, aiming to build friendships and help her settle in Canada.



ZOE is a 43-year-old lifelong Torontonian and a seasoned artist currently residing in Forest Hill. As a painter and visual artist herself, Zoe's passion for the arts has led her on a perpetual exploration of Toronto's vibrant cultural scene. Zoe is not just a casual observer but an avid participant in the city's art community. Her frequent visits to every gallery in Toronto, from the AGO to the ROM, reflect her commitment to staying attuned to the ever-evolving artistic landscape. A lover of the public art movement, Zoe often finds herself drawn downtown to immerse herself in the dynamic street art scene. Beyond her artistic endeavours, Zoe channels her thoughts, and admittedly, her frustrations into a blog dedicated to the Toronto art scene. In her writings, she expresses concern about Toronto becoming an inhospitable place for artists to not only survive but also thrive. Zoe's blog serves as a platform to shed light on the challenges faced by the artistic community, offering a passionate voice in support of its survival and flourishing. Adding another layer to her commitment, Zoe is always on the lookout to elevate and mentor young emerging artists. She fears that these promising talents aren't given a sufficient platform to share their craft and contribute to the city's artistic dialogue. Her dream is for Toronto to evolve into a city where art is accessible and celebrated year-round, breaking free from the confines of festivals and conferences, and becoming an integral part of the city's cultural fabric.

DESIGN JAM PERSONAS

GROUP 3 PERSONAS



SANJAY is a 25-year-old graduate student at the neighbouring York University, originally hailing from London, Ontario, pursuing his Masters in Critical Disability Studies. In this program, he navigates the complex landscape of disability through critical lenses, intertwining social policy, equity, and cultural movements both locally and globally. His passion extends to studying projects in the city, driven by his area of study, where he serves as a passionate advocate and critic, evaluating Toronto's inclusivity and accessibility. What sets Sanjay apart is his personal journey as an amputee due to a childhood injury, a challenge he does not let slow him down. Rather, he channels this experience into his studies, driven by the desire to advocate for those in differently abled bodies. As he enjoys activities in the area, Sanjay views the city through the lens of his own studies and lived experience, striving to make a positive impact on the inclusivity and accessibility of Toronto for everyone. In his free time, Sanjay actively seeks affordable activities around York University, always mindful of his student budget but enthusiastic about enjoying the fun offerings in the area.



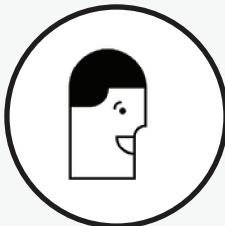
CATHERINE is a 38-year-old single mom of two lively boys and is navigating the return to work after her maternity leave. In the face of the affordability crisis, she seeks meaningful family activities that won't break the bank, opting for free or highly affordable options to capture her kids' attention and allow them to expend their boundless energy safely. Acknowledging the financial strain of organized sports, Catherine actively explores alternatives that offer engagement for her boys while being budget-friendly. Balancing her responsibilities as an Emergency Room nurse at Humber River Hospital, Catherine not only seeks engaging activities for her boys but also desires connection with other moms sharing similar experiences. Longing for comfortable spaces at kids' events where she can unwind, perhaps with a cup of coffee, while her boys play, she is eager to create a supportive network of fellow moms. In the dynamic juggle of work, family, and budgeting, Catherine remains resilient, pursuing affordable, engaging, and community-oriented activities for her family.

DESIGN JAM PERSONAS

GROUP 4 PERSONAS



IAN is a 31-year-old high school teacher, is renowned for his ability to captivate students and make learning engaging. Hailing from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation reserve, near Brantford, Ian annually brings students to Toronto to enrich their education on Canadian history. On a constant quest to breathe life into his curriculum, he actively seeks opportunities to enhance his students' educational experiences. Ian finds particular joy when Indigenous artists are given a platform, and their stories are highlighted, emphasizing the importance of representation. Crucially, Ian insists that this representation is executed with respect and authenticity, avoiding tokenization and ensuring a genuine celebration of Indigenous culture and perspectives. Beyond his classroom, Ian passionately advocates for improving Canadian education curriculums, urging Ontario to better incorporate Indigenous history. Every semester, he eagerly explores new destinations to bring his students, yet he has yet to delve much into North York with them. Ian's commitment extends beyond the classroom as he strives to foster inclusive education and a deeper understanding of Canada's diverse heritage.



SOHAM is a 49-year-old tourist hailing from Vancouver and a dedicated father of three. Frequently visiting Toronto for his consulting work, he seeks opportunities to bring his children along for the trips. Despite his efforts, he hasn't found Toronto to be an ideal destination for family excursions, occasionally finding the city's offerings underwhelming for his kids with too much focus on nightlife and restaurants. Soham is an avid cyclist with a profound passion for photography. Always on the lookout for new places to explore and capture through his lens, he seeks destinations in Toronto that go beyond the typical tourist attractions – and ideally, pass on and nurture these two passions among his children. Soham's love for cycling has led him to discover some parts of Toronto, but he hasn't ventured further north beyond Casa Loma. Eager to discover family-friendly destinations, he is in search of unique and enriching experiences that cater to both his children's interests and his own passions. While he finds the family-friendly atmosphere he seeks in Vancouver, Soham is hopeful that Toronto can offer similar opportunities, ultimately seeking to redefine his view of the city as a place where he can forge enduring memories and foster shared interests with his beloved family, turning each visit into a cherished chapter in their family story.

TEAM PITCHES

FIRST PLACE: TEAM 10

To address the design jam problem, Team 10 presented the idea of FUN: Find Your Neighbour, as an inclusive place for everyone in the community to connect.

Connection: Team 10 wanted to create a place for everyone to connect. Using a central kite flying area, art programming, playgrounds, skateboarding areas, seating areas and paths. The seating areas connect people while providing protection from the sun with greenery.

Placemaking: Team 10 also argues the importance of creating community spaces through community art areas, Indigenous cultural representation with storytelling and an Indigenous artist in residence, and the Dome, which is a greenhouse that hosts community classes and local art.

Inclusive: Lastly, to ensure the space is accessible for all a smooth path is created for wheelchairs and strollers. People are brought together by accessible paths and affordable community classes.



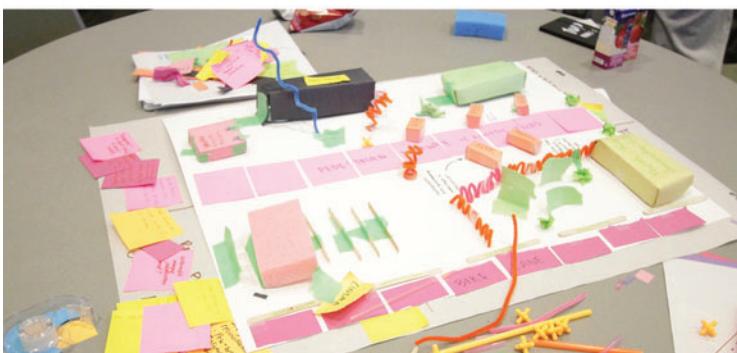
TEAM PITCHES PEOPLE'S CHOICE: TEAM 7

To address the design jam problem, Team 7 shared the Innovative Innovators to create more arts and culture based spaces. They created a space that honours Downsview's past and brings community together through art and learning.

History: Team 7 wanted to create a place where the community and kids can come learn about Indigenous history, aviation, and the military history of the site. They recommend the use of an Indigenous longhouse and shipping containers for multipurpose arts programming to represent the diverse history of the space.

Culture: Team 7 wanted to create a place where the community can experience a range of cultural experiences such as a Downsview International Film festival, sculptures to honour local artists, and Indigenous programming.

Innovation: Team 7 want to promote youth innovation in the community using a Youth Innovation Hub and hosting school trips. They also want to showcase innovation on site by lighting the paths with kinetic energy and solar panels.





STANDOUT IDEAS



CULTURE AND ART

- Dedicated spaces to learn about Indigenous history, art, and culture
- Programs like Indigenous artists in residence
- Spaces dedicated to community programming
- Spaces to share food to bring people together



GREENERY AND ILLUMINATION

- Nature paths with greenery for wind blocking and sun protection
- Lighting and power sources generated from renewable energy
- Many greenspaces intersecting the site, either beside paths or in greenhouses



COMFORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Warming and cooling centers for year-round comfort
- Smooth, wide pedestrian paths to support wheelchair and stroller use
- Separate paths for cyclists for safety
- Seating areas for rest and gathering



HERITAGE AND PROGRAMMING

- The aviation and military history is represented through art and programming
- Artwork from local artists representing different cultural backgrounds
- Affordable arts programming for community members



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NORTHCREST DEVELOPMENTS

The 1UP Toronto Conference and particularly the 1UP Design Jam provided a platform for youth to shape the built environment around them in a fun and creative way. The ideas that each student team proposed within such a short period of time demonstrated their level of thoughtfulness and consideration for the users. We have summarized some key themes that emerged from the student teams' ideas. We hope that Northcrest Developments will consider incorporating them.

COMMON THEMES

- Emphasis on inclusive spaces to connect different community members
- Lots of focus on accessibility to include people of different abilities, income levels, and ages
- Encourage heritage and cultural representation through murals, programming, and artworks
- Focus on greenery as a way to increase comfort from wind and sun

NEXT STEPS

1. Partner with local artists and communities.

Showcase artworks that celebrate the diversity of the community through community events/ exhibitions. Partner with local arts organizations to bring more cultural events to the Community Runway.

2. Connect with Indigenous communities

Create spaces and programming in partnership with Indigenous creators to share arts, history, and culture

3. Gather feedback from diverse community members

Focus on the perspectives and needs of diverse communities to ensure that the public space of the Community runway represents the interests of different groups.

5 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Agincourt Collegiate Institute	Bayview Secondary School	Bill Hogarth Secondary School	Bloor Collegiate Institute	Cameron Heights Central Institute	Toronto Academy	Crestwood Preparatory College	Crescent School	Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute	De La Salle College	Dennis Morris Catholic High School	Father John Redmond Forest Hill Collegiate	Georgetown International Academy	Hawthorn School	Humberside Collegiate Institute	Huron Heights Secondary School	Iroquois Ridge High School	Jarvis Collegiate Institute	Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute	Leaside High School	Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute	Markham District High School	Markville Secondary School	Martingrove Collegiate Institute	Maxwell Heights Secondary School	Milliken Mills High School	Pierre Elliot Trudeau High School	Port Credit Secondary School	R.H. King Academy	Richmond Green Secondary School	Riverdale Collegiate Institute	Sinclair Secondary School	St. Basil-the-Great College	St. John Henry Newman Catholic High School	St. Joseph Secondary School	St. Katherine Drexel Catholic High School	St. Robert Catholic High School	Tommy Douglas High School	Ursula Franklin Academy	Westview Centennial Secondary School	White Oaks Secondary School	William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute	Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute	York Humber High School
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