Pedestrian Streets Policy & Guidelines Development

Presentation to Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas

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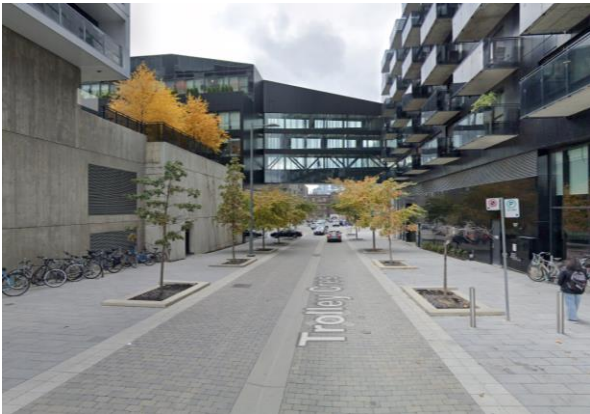Strategic Policy & Initiatives

Project Overview

The Challenge

There is growing demand to convert existing roads into pedestrian-only spaces, but staff have no clear policy, standards, or implementation strategy to determine where, how, and by whom this should be done.

Existing policy & programs

- Street events
- Curbside parklets (CafeTO)
- Traffic management closure
- Shared streets
- Complete streets
- Sidewalk expansions

Where we need new policy

Seasonal street closures

Permanent street closures

- Public plaza
- Pedestrian pathway
- Activated laneway

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How we do this now

Willcocks St & Gould St
Permanent closures with maintenance agreements with adjacent property owners

Bellair St & Market St
Seasonal closures through temporary street event permits

Reasons to Pedestrianize

Create **accessible** places for passive or active uses (public space)

Support local **businesses** and business districts (placemaking)

Enhance the **pedestrian network** (new walkways)

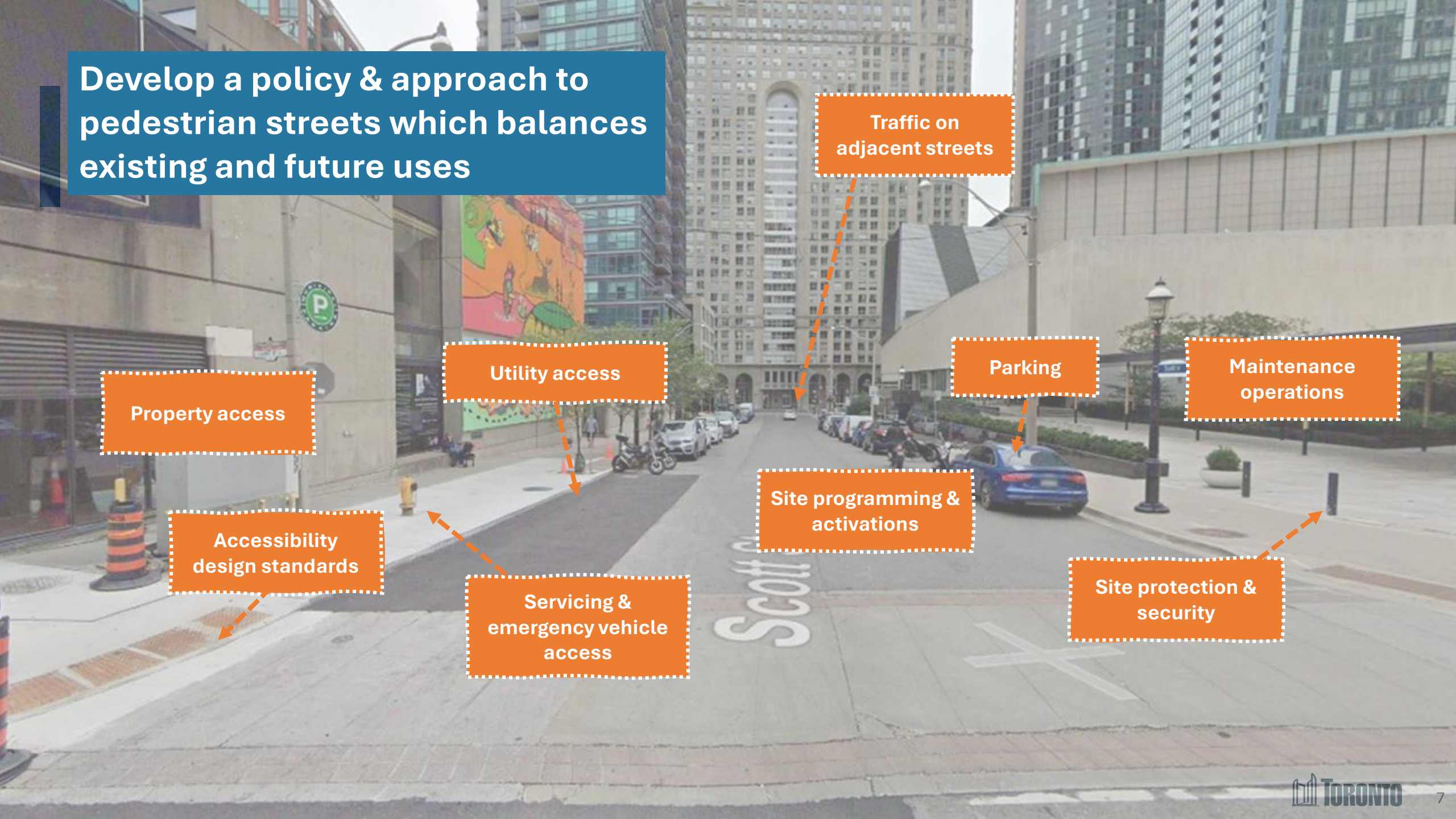Improve traffic **safety** on local streets (traffic management)

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Develop a policy & approach to pedestrian streets which balances existing and future uses

Traffic on adjacent streets

Utility access

Property access

Parking

Maintenance operations

Site programming & activations

Accessibility design standards

Servicing & emergency vehicle access

Site protection & security

Goal & Objectives

The Goal

The City has a clear policy framework for responding to requests and opportunities to enhance pedestrian experience, safety, and comfort on streets.

Objectives

1. Establish guidelines to determine if full pedestrianization of a particular street is feasible and desirable, or whether alternative design solutions are more appropriate
2. Create an operational strategy to define key tasks, roles, and responsibilities for planning, implementation and management of pedestrianized streets

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Lessons From Other Cities

Lessons Learned

Montreal

Take a program-based approach with dedicated funds, resources, and defined staff roles.

Vancouver

Strong external partnerships and collaboration for maintenance and programming.

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Lessons Learned

Los Angeles

Extensive community consultation and engagement to plan and pilot

New York

Phased implementation and temporary pilots to test and refine concepts

Portland

Ensure financial stability through municipal funds, private sponsors, or grants

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BIA Collaboration Opportunities

Project Planning & Strategies

- Represent business interests in planning
- Gather input from member businesses and local groups (e.g. property owners, residents, schools, etc.) on site design and management strategies

Programming & Activation

- Develop programming and activation strategies and coordinate implementation
- Plan and deliver events
- Oversee activations by external partners
- Promote activities and events
- Notify businesses and residents as needed

BIA Collaboration Opportunities
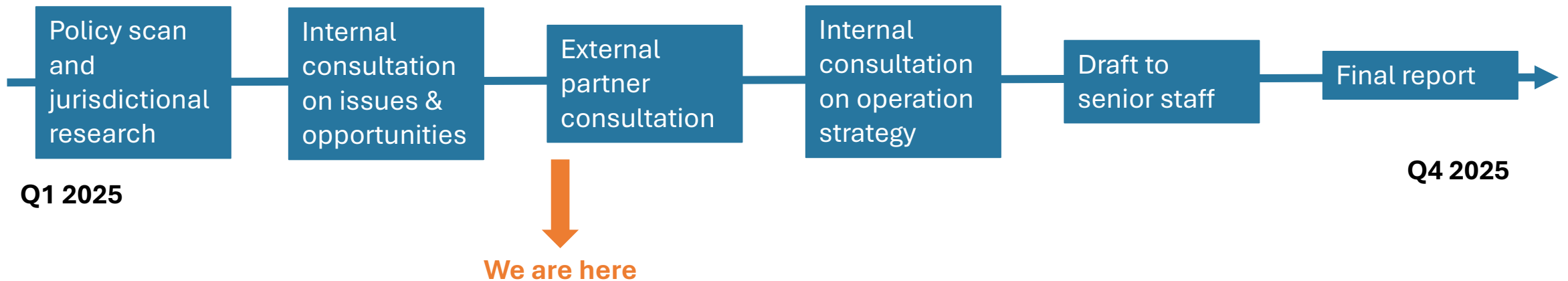

Maintenance & Operations

- Coordinate site servicing schedules (e.g. waste collection, delivery, etc.)
- Micro-cleaning and seasonal upkeep
- Maintain planters and furniture
- Maintenance of accessibility standards
- Ongoing site supervision and monitoring

Next Steps

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Next Steps

1. Circulate questionnaire
2. Meet with interested BIAs
3. Report back with emerging directions

Policy scan and jurisdictional research → Internal consultation on issues & opportunities → External partner consultation → Internal consultation on operation strategy → Draft to senior staff → Final report

Q1 2025

We are here

Q4 2025

Questions for BIAs

1. Is your BIA interested in seeing one or more streets pedestrianized on a seasonal or permanent basis? If so, where?
2. What benefit(s) do you believe pedestrianization could bring?
3. What potential impacts would you be concerned about?
4. What do you see as the appropriate role(s) for BIAs in supporting the pedestrianization of an existing street? What resources and capacity do you have or need to fulfill this role(s)?
5. What do you think the City's role should be?

Staff will circulate an online questionnaire to gather input and responses to these questions

Questions?