

Strategic Direction

5 Build a great neighbourhood.

- 5.1 Continue to support the development of a larger residential community in the downtown to foster a local trade market to offer a diverse array of neighbourhood 'daily needs' commercial enterprises.
- 5.2 Create a shared public space on Talbot Street between Covent Garden Market and Budweiser Gardens to provide a more functional single public space.
- 5.3 Create intimate urban spaces by reinstating and incorporating existing laneways, and introducing new mid-block pedestrian connections into new development.
- 5.4 Create a distinct and consistent public realm treatment that identifies the downtown as a unique neighbourhood.
- 5.5 Create a distinct urban neighbourhood that builds upon and conserves downtown's cultural heritage values.
- 5.6 Create civic spaces and park spaces, such as children's play areas and urban dog parks, that provide neighbourhood amenities and appeal to a variety of age groups, lifestyles and household compositions.
- 5.7 Study the feasibility of a grocery store investment in the downtown.

Goal

To support and enhance public amenities within the downtown neighbourhood to improve the overall quality of life for its residents.

Why Is This Important?

Providing investments in great public spaces supports a positive neighbourhood image, enhances livability and ensures a vibrant and safe place to be. Positive public space will help to attract a variety of household types and commercial uses, which in turn increases the vitality of the downtown.



Providing residents with convenient access to their daily needs and amenity spaces is important to creating a successful neighbourhood.



An example of a lively laneway.



A conceptual rendering of the Market District looking west towards the Thames River.

Strategic Direction

6 Create the buzz.

- 6.1 Support the downtown's distinct identity by encouraging artistic expression and cultural activity that promotes the central city as a hub for culture in London.
- 6.2 Solidify the downtown as the cultural hub of the city by locating a new performance centre in close proximity to other existing cultural facilities and our entertainment venues.
- 6.3 Use innovative lighting and audio technology to enliven downtown buildings and spaces.
- 6.4 Initiate community events and visitor experiences that are completely original or uniquely adapted to express London's individual identity.
- 6.5 Strike partnerships that link commercial enterprises with educational institutions to incubate and nurture new business and job opportunities downtown.
- 6.6 Pursue opportunities for a single entity to lead the coordination of programming and support maintenance of public spaces in the downtown.

Goal

To foster the downtown’s reputation for presenting diverse experiences and sustained vitality by programming and maintaining public spaces throughout the downtown area and to build a unique brand for the downtown area.

To create an engaging downtown that is frequented by locals who are proud to share their experiences with visitors who arrive.

Why Is This Important?

The downtown’s economic success is tied to its ability to attract people to live and visit repeatedly. Each year London attracts an increasing number of post-secondary students, both nationally and globally. Creating a city that is attractive to graduates is essential to retaining talent in London and attracting this segment of the population.

Some of the most successful public spaces are rigorously programmed. To create a “vibe” for the downtown, these spaces need to have activities that will attract people consistently, to the point where impromptu visits occur based on the downtown being known for delivering on “something always happening.” This “buzz” is important to establish early on to ensure the success of new projects and programs.



Community events and festivals at Rotary Square (left) and Victoria Park (right) support the downtown’s image as the cultural centre of the city and an exciting place to be.



Innovative building lighting downtown.



An example of a performance venue.

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS



Budweiser Gardens
(formerly the John
Labatt Centre).



This Plan identifies strategic public investment opportunities intended to stimulate private investment. Implementing these projects will reinforce the community's vision for the downtown and maintain and reinforce its place as the preeminent destination for the city and region.

Some of the projects and their associated actions may occur immediately, while others will occur over the long term. It is important, however, to ensure they are executed in alignment with the planning framework cited earlier in this Plan. Implementation of these projects will be more precisely scoped through required studies and detailed design, as future municipal budgets are set over time, and/or as development opportunities emerge and partnerships are formed.

These projects are important as they are primarily public investments in the downtown that set the stage for more private sector investment. As has happened in the past, both in London and throughout the province, strategic public investment encourages private investment which ultimately leads to a stronger downtown.

The main focus of these projects is to improve the public realm and the pedestrian experience and create improved amenities for downtown living, business development and connections to the downtown. Through these measures the city's image can be enhanced and the city can attract and retain the future workforce in a livable and vibrant city.

The measure of any great civilization is in its cities, and the measure of a city's greatness is to be found in the quality of its public spaces, its parks and squares.

John Ruskin

The following Transformational Projects provide a high-level conceptual overview of how the Vision, Values, and Strategic Directions of this Plan can be implemented. Detailed studies are necessary prior to the implementation of these projects. Many of the projects are contingent on a Downtown Transportation Assessment as well as project-related Environmental Assessments. The Downtown Transportation Assessment is intended to serve as the technical case for the Transformational Projects having transportation/transit implications. These detailed studies and background reports will outline the feasibility and limitations of these projects.

The proposed projects and improvements as outlined will need to have regard for both existing and future servicing infrastructure, both publicly and privately owned. Utility congestion in the downtown area is already very significant and some of the planned initiatives may affect their timing and/or design options.


Development should also account for the existing context of the natural environment and incorporate natural features into the design where practicable to minimize the need for replanting.

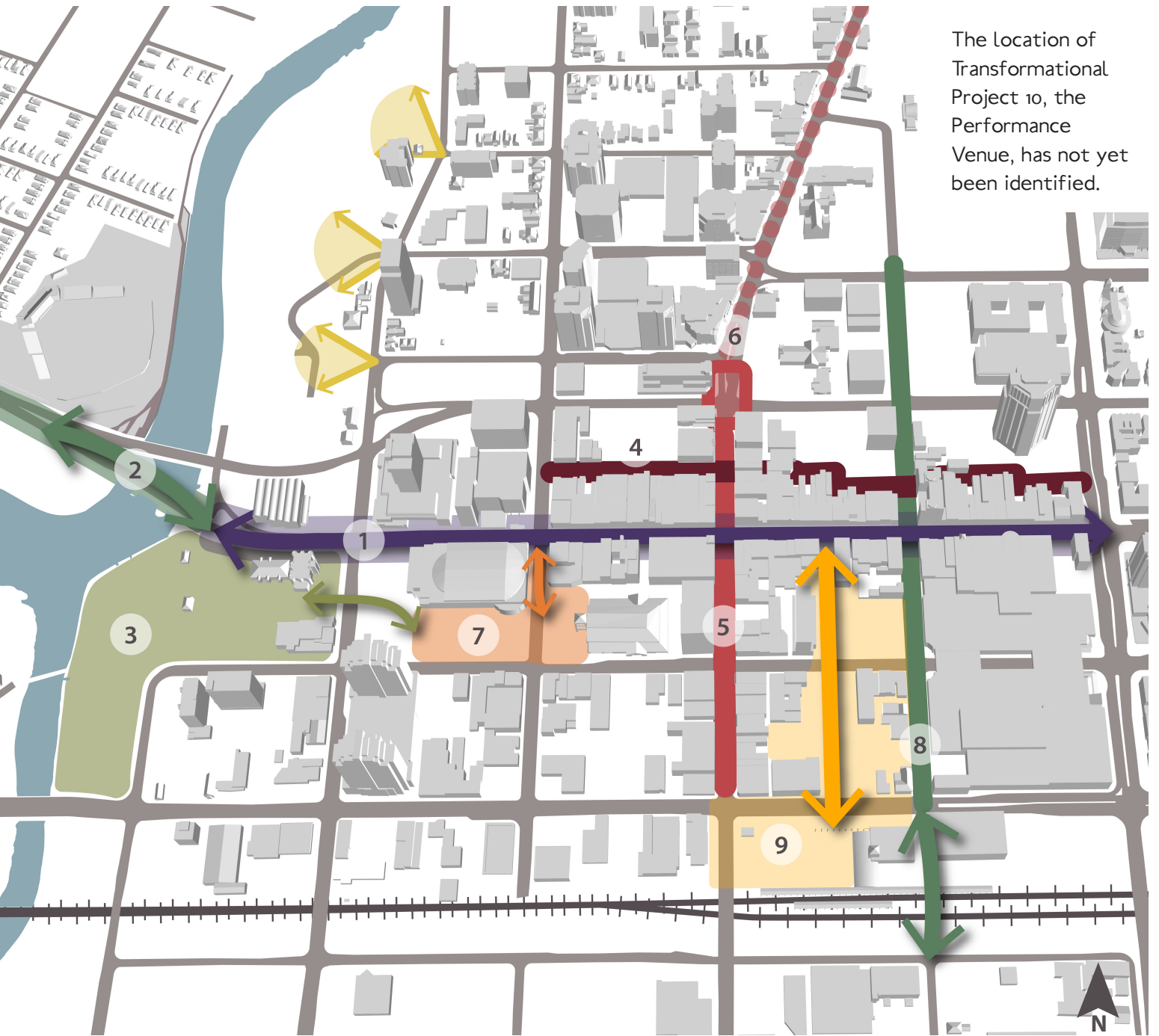
While it is expected that the Transformational Projects will each undergo an evolution, it is important that the intent of these projects is maintained.

Many of the Transformational Projects build on the existing pedestrian, bicycle and transportation networks, enhancing the experience of moving along these corridors as well as providing destinations within the downtown. As can be seen from Map 11, many of these projects are linear and act as linkages within, to and from the downtown and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

There is direction throughout this Plan to reclaim views, most importantly to the Thames River. These views are illustrated on Map 11 alongside the locations of the Transformational Projects.

**Map 11:
Transformational
Project Locations
& Views to be
Reclaimed**

Dundas Place	1
Cross-river Connection	2
Forks of the Thames	3
Laneway Connections	4
Richmond Walk	5
Queens Station	6
Market District	7
Clarence Street Connector	8
City Gateway	9
Views to be reclaimed	



The location of Transformational Project 10, the Performance Venue, has not yet been identified.

Transformational Project 1

Dundas Place

What is the project?

Dundas Place runs from Wellington Street to the Thames River transforming Dundas Street into a seamless flexible street and linear public space. A unifying surface treatment will extend from building face to building face along this section of Dundas Street, enabling the space in between to easily transition functions at different times of the year.

On-street parking or sidewalk patios can be accommodated by relocating removable bollards. These bollards can also be removed entirely to create a continuous surface during events that close the street to vehicular traffic. Ensuring the highest standard of day-to-day and life cycle maintenance also is an essential aspect of this project.

Why is this project important?

This project identifies and reinforces Dundas Street as the most exciting street in the city. It builds on the legacy of the downtown. It supports the street's development as a premiere destination for cultural and entertainment events that can easily and frequently merge with adjacent commercial enterprises to create diverse multi-sensory experiences.

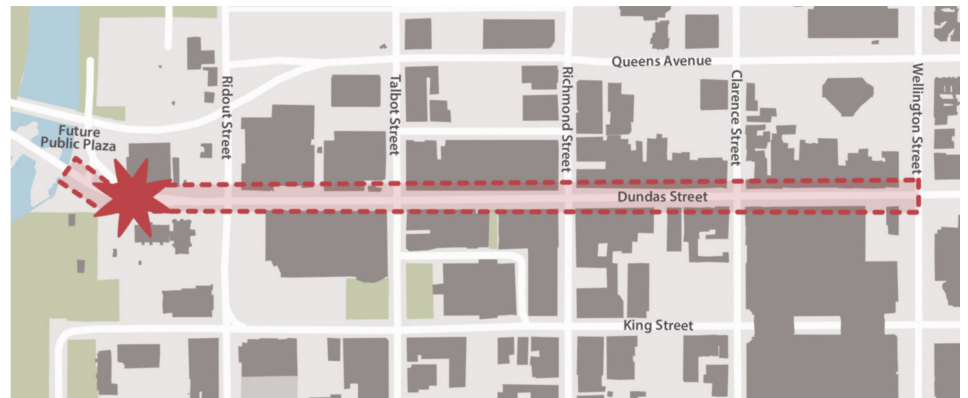
What will this project do for the downtown?

Two values of this Plan, livability and innovation, influence this project. The flexible street provides an exceptional public amenity for those living in the downtown neighbourhood and provides space well-equipped to routinely provide programmed

events compelling for visitors to the downtown. Similar projects on a scale of this nature in North America are rare and certainly this provides London with an opportunity to showcase how public space, land use and transportation can be innovatively combined to create a great place to visit, live and do business.



A conceptual rendering of Dundas Street illustrating how the street can be easily closed for a festival.



Dundas Place study area.

Transformational Project 2

Cross-river Connection

What is the project?

This project consists of significantly enhancing the connection between the east and west sides of the Thames River by improving the pedestrian crossing experience and creating a distinctive sense of place when entering the downtown. It would convert Kensington Bridge into a non-vehicular connection across the Thames River to connect the downtown with the westerly neighbourhoods and John Labatt Park. It would create a continuous plaza space between Museum London and the former Middlesex Court House and seamlessly link Dundas Place with the Forks of the Thames (identified on page 49).

Why is this project important?

This project connects the well-established park system along both sides of the Thames River, builds upon the Dundas Place project, and links important public spaces and activities around the Forks of the Thames including Museum London, the former Middlesex Court House, and Labatt Park. It allows pedestrians and cyclists to seamlessly and safely access the many downtown amenities from the Blackfriars/Petersville neighbourhood.

What will this project do for the downtown?

This project will establish a strong east-west connection across the Thames River greatly improving the fluidity of the established park system. It will draw spectators and visitors to Labatt Park, Museum London and the former Middlesex Court House and draw them into the downtown restaurants and shops.

It will build upon the Forks of the Thames Transformational Project and link it to Dundas Place.



Looking west from the downtown at Kensington Bridge.



An example of an urban public plaza.