

RALPH THORNTON COMMUNITY CENTRE



Strategic Plan 2026



Who We Are

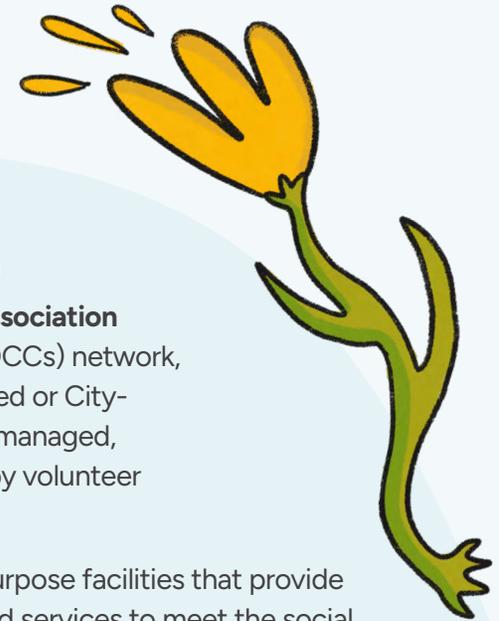


OUR VISION

A thriving community rooted in **connection, engagement, and belonging.**

OUR MISSION

We are a **community-led** centre offering space, programs, and resources where neighbours **gather and grow.**



OUR MODEL

RTCC is a member of the **Association of Community Centres (AOCCs)** network, which consists of City-owned or City-managed facilities that are managed, operated, and maintained by volunteer Boards of Management.

These Centres are multi-purpose facilities that provide public space, programs, and services to meet the social and recreation needs of local communities. They are committed to fostering a sense of community, promoting civic engagement and enhancing the quality of life through their community, recreational, and social service programs.

The core administrative activities of the community centres are funded by the City of Toronto while the program component is funded by the AOCC through various revenue sources, such as grants, donations, and fees.

For more information on the AOCC network at the City of Toronto, visit www.toronto.ca/AOCC.

Our Values

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

The RTCC works collaboratively and in partnership with individuals, groups, and organizations to achieve our mission and vision. We work in ways that engage community members, foster on-going relationships and build the strengths of the whole community.



INCLUSION AND RESPECT

The RTCC supports and adheres to the City of Toronto Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Policy. We aim to role model respectful and inclusive service delivery, employment, and procurement practices which encourage diverse perspectives striving for equitable treatment for all. The RTCC promotes social inclusivity in all its activities and programming.



EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The RTCC works to build relationships with communities, advocating for policies and systemic changes that create long term improvement, equity and wellness for all within our community and the larger society.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The RTCC supports community members, especially the more marginalized, to increase their ability to solve problems, define and achieve their objectives, and fully participate in and contribute to community life.

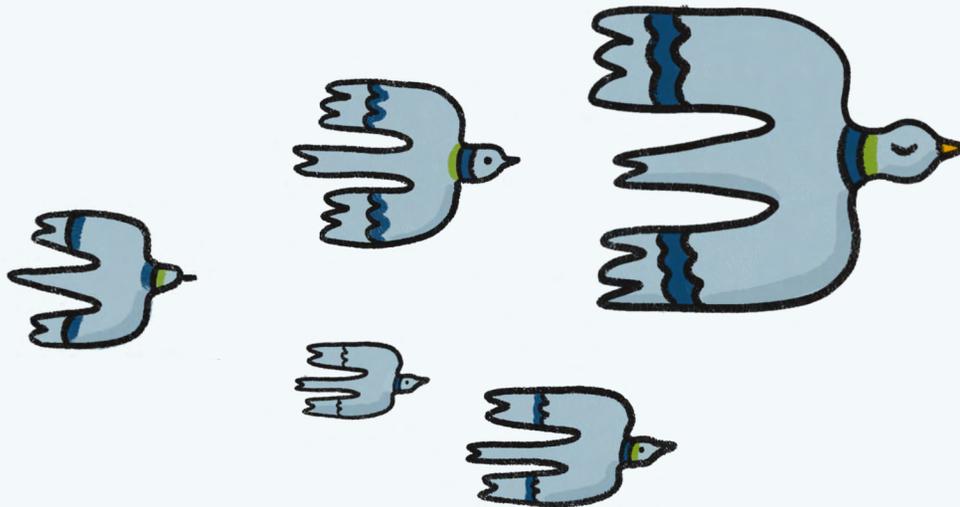
COMMUNITY BUILDING

The RTCC actively promotes the building of relationships and collective action across and between our diverse communities to strengthen the whole.

What Our Community is Facing...

Riverdale, Leslieville, and Riverside are experiencing rapid change. Rising costs, new transit infrastructure, and increasing density are reshaping the area, while long-standing affordability and service gaps are becoming more pronounced.

- Mental Health and Isolation
- Inequality & Increased Cost of Living
- Development Impacts, Density, and Congestion
- Increased Demand on RTCC and Services



KEY QUESTIONS

We will face these realities with **curiosity** and **intention**—by continuously asking questions of ourselves and our ongoing work in service of our mission and ultimately our vision:

1. What is our guiding purpose and role?
2. How do we take and manage risks?
3. How do we handle conflicts effectively?
4. What does true equity, inclusion, and access look like for RTCC?
5. Are we serving those who need us most?
6. Does our work matter, and how is it perceived?
7. How do we balance space for revenue, access, and programs?
8. How do we measure and show our impact?
9. Are we proactive, and how do we adapt to change?
10. Who shapes our decisions, and how do we address bias?
11. How can we have fun doing this?

Our 2026 Goals

STRENGTHEN EQUITY, RELATIONSHIPS, AND SAFETY

Create a strong internal culture grounded in equity, belonging, and safety by strengthening staff facilitation and ongoing professional development. Deepen relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities while honouring their cultures and perspectives. Foster shared values by celebrating meaningful events and ensuring all staff are well trained in safety and equity practices.

MODERNIZE AND ENSURE A WELCOMING CENTRE

Ensure the Centre is safe, functional, and welcoming by modernizing financial systems and addressing state-of-good-repair priorities. Improve safety and security measures to support a positive, accessible experience for all users. These upgrades will strengthen operational efficiency and long-term sustainability.



DEEPEN AND ENHANCE OUR PROGRAMMING, SERVICES, AND SPACE OFFERING

Strengthen relationships with participants, volunteers, and families to better understand and respond to community needs. Expand and adapt programs and services to address gaps and unmet demand. Enhance internal capacity by improving grant planning, writing, and budgeting practices.



ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT THE CENTRE

Build strong community support by raising funds that directly sustain Centre programs and projects. Increase awareness of the Centre's impact and mission while expanding room bookings. Strengthen the Centre's public profile to ensure it is recognizable, valued, and well-utilized.



BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND VISIBILITY FOR THE CENTRE

Increase the Centre's reach and influence by strengthening events and outreach activities. Explore community canvassing and partnership opportunities to connect with new audiences. These efforts will enhance visibility, collaboration, and long-term community engagement.



How We Decide

As we navigate changes and opportunities, we will focus our efforts clearly in areas where we can deliver the greatest impact:

1

Is there a **clear community need** and who will it serve?

2

Does it **align** with our mission, vision, and values?

3

Does it **fit our role** and the City's expectations?

4

Can we offer **unique value**?

5

Is it **inclusive and targeted** to those most in need?

6

Are we **fostering partnerships** while respecting boundaries?

7

Do we have the **people, time, and funding** to make this work?

8

What **additional benefits** could this opportunity bring?



How we report and evaluate

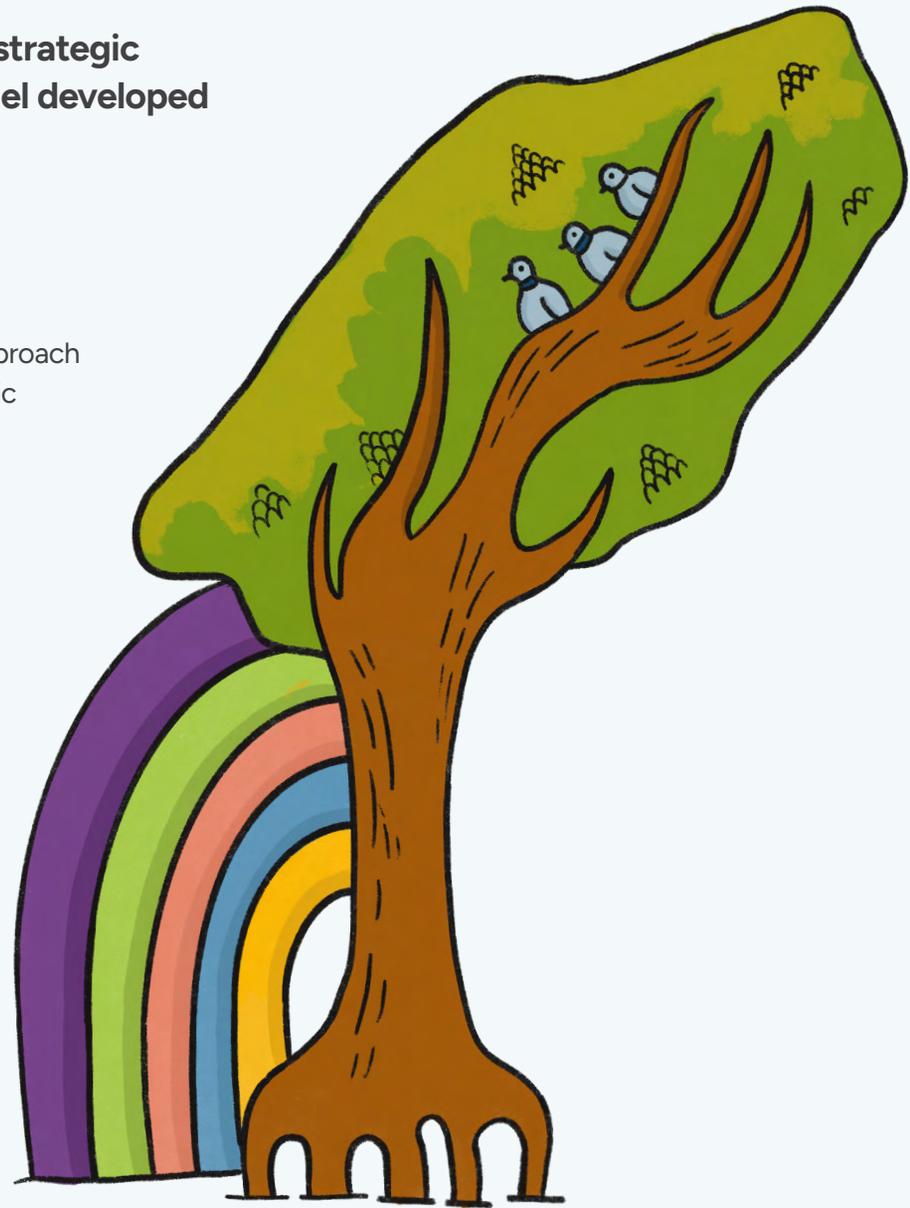
The Ralph Thornton Community Centre has adapted its strategic framework from the “Real-time Strategic Planning” model developed by David La Piana.

Rather than setting a rigid timeline of tasks for the coming three years, The Centre has adopted a planning framework that steers its strategy and goal setting on an annual basis.

Our community, context, and lived reality are always changing and our approach must be flexible enough to respond. With that understanding, this strategic plan lays out how we will respond to our changing world while staying on a path towards fulfilling our mission. This approach also anticipates the possibility of major shifts in our surroundings and charts a path for us to refocus and prioritize in an inclusive and strategic way.

We will convene annually to evaluate, analyze, and prioritize our goals while maintaining our mission and focus. **We will do this by:**

- Reporting to the board
- Quarterly financial, safety and security, and operational deliverables
- Our annual report
- Program and Service evaluation
- New Program Evaluation Framework with strengthened impact
- Internal evaluation through staff and Board
- Planning Retreat
- Clarifying and setting priorities for 2027





RALPH THORNTON
COMMUNITY CENTRE



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