

4.0

The Opportunity for Tower Neighbourhood Renewal in the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Many of the goals that are typical of Tower Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives in European jurisdictions coincide closely with recent areas of provincial policy development. Increasing transit use, reducing poverty, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating complete communities are central tenets of Tower Neighbourhood Renewal. They are also key areas of provincial interest. Through recent initiatives such as The Big Move - Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Go Green Action Plan on Climate Change, and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Province is seeking to achieve a number of the same goals that Tower Neighbourhood Renewal has successfully achieved elsewhere.

In this section, we explore the links between Tower Neighbourhood Renewal and these areas of provincial policy interest, and suggest locations in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) where there may be particularly high potential for Tower Neighbourhood Renewal to help achieve these provincial priorities.

This analysis places focus on large apartment clusters, which are defined as groupings of five or more Apartment Towers.

4.2 Supporting Poverty Reduction

Context

Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, adopted in 2008, sets a target of reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25 per cent over the next five years. The strategy is intended to be comprehensive, addressing issues of income, through measures such as increases to the Ontario Child Benefit, but also other critical contributors to poverty such as school readiness, educational attainment, health care and housing. The strategy is also focused on expanding the success of New Canadians, through education and skills training, as well as streamlining entry into Ontario's professions.

Expanding the availability of affordable housing is an important part of the strategy. Since 2003, Ontario has funded approximately 35,000 housing allowances and provided funding for the development and/or refurbishment of 22,000 affordable housing units in Ontario. The 2008 Ontario Budget committed \$100 million for social housing providers to repair existing social housing, including energy efficiency upgrades.

As was demonstrated in Section 3.6, there is a strong correlation between Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods and areas of social need. This suggests that Tower Neighbourhood Renewal can be a key element of the Province's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

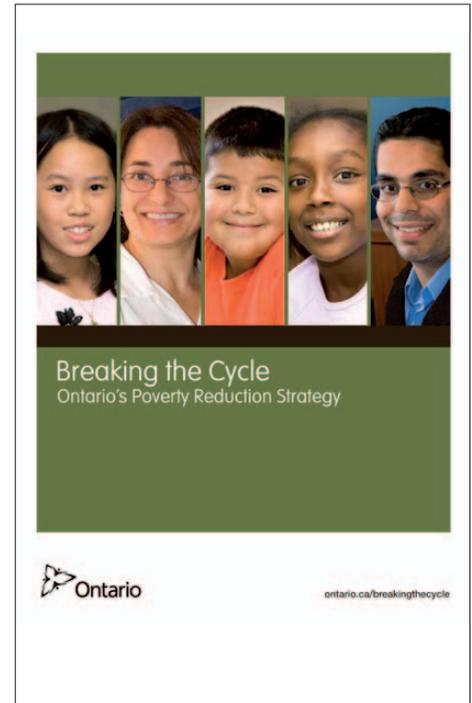
This correlation also suggests that Tower Neighbourhood Renewal can be an important part of achieving the Province's health equity goals. The Ministry of Health and Long-term Care has made health equity – addressing health disparities among difference groups in the province – as an explicit policy objective of Local Health Integration Networks. One of the most effective ways to reduce health inequities is by addressing the social determinants of health, such as housing, income, nutrition and social inclusion, all potential elements of Tower Neighbourhood Renewal.

Discussion

Several opportunities exist to integrate Tower Neighbourhood Renewal with the goals and programs of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The large property areas within Apartment Clusters discussed in Section 4.4 and 4.6, which are often underused, provide potential sites for key services, housing options and programs.

A central tenet of the Poverty Reduction Strategy is to break the intergenerational cycle that makes poverty such an insidious problem. Consequently, the strategy focuses first on Ontario's children. Apartment Towers are home to a significant number of young Ontarians. Half of all Apartment Towers in the region have 20 per cent or more of the resident population under 19 years of age. In some Apartment Tower communities, over 40 per cent of residents are under the age of 19.*

As Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods are home to high concentrations of youth in areas of high social need, there is significant potential to integrate Tower Neighbourhood Renewal with Poverty Reduction Strategy programs, such as the expansion of Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Ontario Early Years Centres and After School Programs. The Community Use of Schools Program and Com-



01

Images

- 01) Cover of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy
- 02) East Scarborough Storefront
- 03) Open-air Market in Council Estate, Camden, London, UK
- 04) Community Garden in Council Estate, Regent Park, London, UK

Demographic Analysis

*The analysis of youths and New Canadians in Apartment Neighbourhoods was conducted using StatsCan 2006 data from dissemination areas containing Apartment Towers.

community Hub Program, through which the government provides funding to make school space available for community activities, can provide the central gathering places that many of these neighbourhoods so desperately need. Tower Neighbourhood Renewal presents an opportunity to introduce new amenities and activities for youth, such as active recreation areas, as well as youth specific programming in new infill buildings or within existing towers themselves. The physical process of retrofit and regeneration will also provide opportunities for apprenticeships and construction related jobs.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy is also focused on expanding opportunities for newcomers. Apartment Towers are among the first homes in Canada for newcomers. Half of the Apartment Towers in the region have more than half of residents that were born outside of Canada. In 60 per cent of Apartment Towers, over 10 per cent of residents arrived in Canada after 2001. In some cases, this can be as high as 50 per cent.*

The Poverty Reduction Strategy provides funding to community-based not-for-profit organizations across Ontario to support new immigrants in achieving their potential through the Newcomer Settlement Program. Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods could be integrated with skills training, employment services, newcomer information centres, and English as a Second Language courses to ease arrival and entry into the workforce.

Tower Neighbourhood Renewal can also bring new employment opportunities to what are currently isolated neighbourhoods through land-use diversification that will enable seasonal markets, ground floor commercial conversions, and mixed-use infill. Enhanced transit service and the introduction of new retail and service uses can significantly increase Apartment Tower residents' access to a wide range of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

In many European Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods, local citizens groups and not-for-profit organizations have played critical roles in developing and implementing grassroots initiatives. These initiatives are as much a part of Tower Neighbourhood Renewal as the larger-scale interventions discussed throughout this report and include community gardens, skills training, youth sports programs, child play programs, elder care programs, open space beautification and maintenance programs, the publication of community newspapers and websites, community associations, small business networks and incubators, as well as organizing community festivals. Recognizing the important role played by the not-for-profit sector and community agencies is an important theme of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and it is supported through specific measures such as the Community Opportunities Fund, which provides funding to local community revitalization projects. A successful local example is the East Scarborough Storefront.**

The integration of Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods with a wide range of health services, social services, and local access to fresh food would help address health equity and the wide ranging needs of the resident population as a whole. With the expected doubling of people 65 years of age and older over the next 25 years, providing services for long-term care as well as ensuring full accessibility, as related to Ontario's Accessibility Plan, will enable Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods to provide key housing to meet the needs of this aging population.



02

East Scarborough Storefront

**The East Scarborough Storefront provides a venue for dozens of community agencies and services, and helps facilitate community organizing initiatives and opportunities for community voice, leadership and mobilization. Located in a former police station directly adjacent to a group of Apartment Towers, the Storefront provides community services where they are needed most. Currently fundraising for an expansion, the Storefront provides a unique model for Tower Neighbourhoods throughout the GGH. For more information, visit www.thestorefront.org.



03



04

Access to affordable housing is a key concern of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy currently under development, and concurrent initiatives, such as the Ontario Human Rights Commission provincial consultation on human rights and housing. Apartment Towers are home to many individuals who have high social need. As a result, the majority of the region's 380,000 units offer housing at varying degrees of affordability. Only a fraction of this housing, some 15 per cent in the case of Toronto, is public affordable housing. The majority is private rental housing, rendered affordable through a low position within the housing market, often due to geographic isolation, lack of amenities, and poor state of repair. Furthermore, as discussed in Section 3.5, much of this housing stock is two or three bedroom apartments, providing a considerable legacy of affordable family housing. The volume of privately owned Apartment Towers and their function as affordable housing - and affordable family housing - is a unique characteristic of the GGH.

The ample open space within Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods provides an opportunity for thoughtful infill development to increase the region's affordable housing stock, through the inclusion of new housing options, such as affordable home ownership, cooperatives and not-for profit housing, as well as housing forms specific to the needs of seniors, young families and other demographics.

In addition to opportunities for community investment, a primary aspect of Tower Neighbourhood Renewal is to retain and modernize this important housing stock through physical upgrades, maintaining it as a key resource for future generations. An additional opportunity lies in ensuring energy security for low-income tenants through environmental refurbishment of Apartment Towers. Green upgrades will reduce energy usage and cost, preventing rent and utility spikes as the cost of energy rises. This will also aid in the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs). A full compliment of energy reduction measures will be discussed in Section 4.3.

Taking a Closer Look - Large Cluster Analysis

While a significant proportion of Apartment Towers are associated with areas of social need, large clusters of several towers demand particular attention. The series of maps beginning on page 68 show locations in the GGH where there are clusters of five or more Apartment Towers in areas of high or very high social need. Collectively, these represent about half of all Apartment Towers in the GGH (45 per cent).

These locations, containing large and dense populations, would be expected to benefit the most from the introduction of the programs and initiatives that comprise the Poverty Reduction Strategy.



01



02



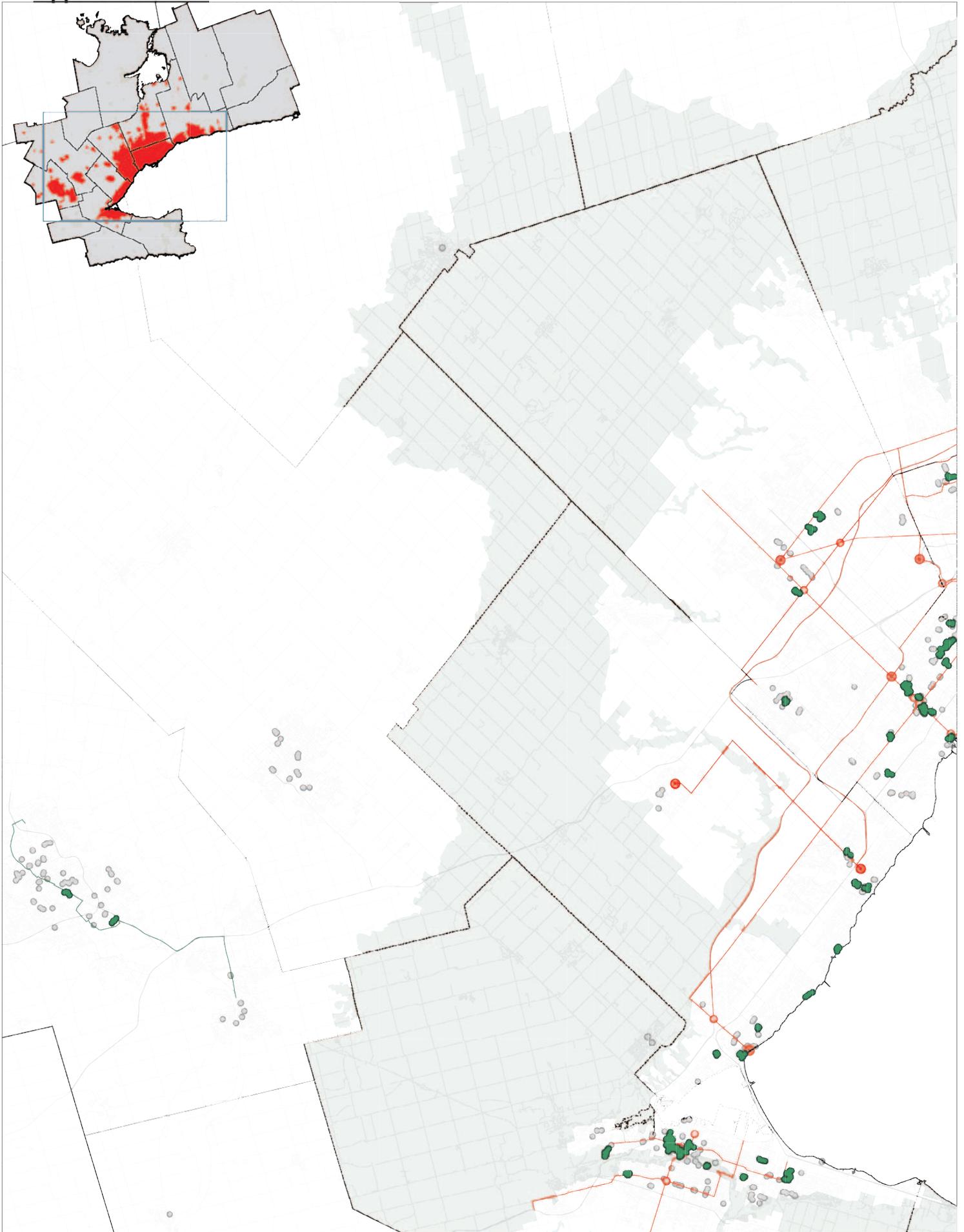
03

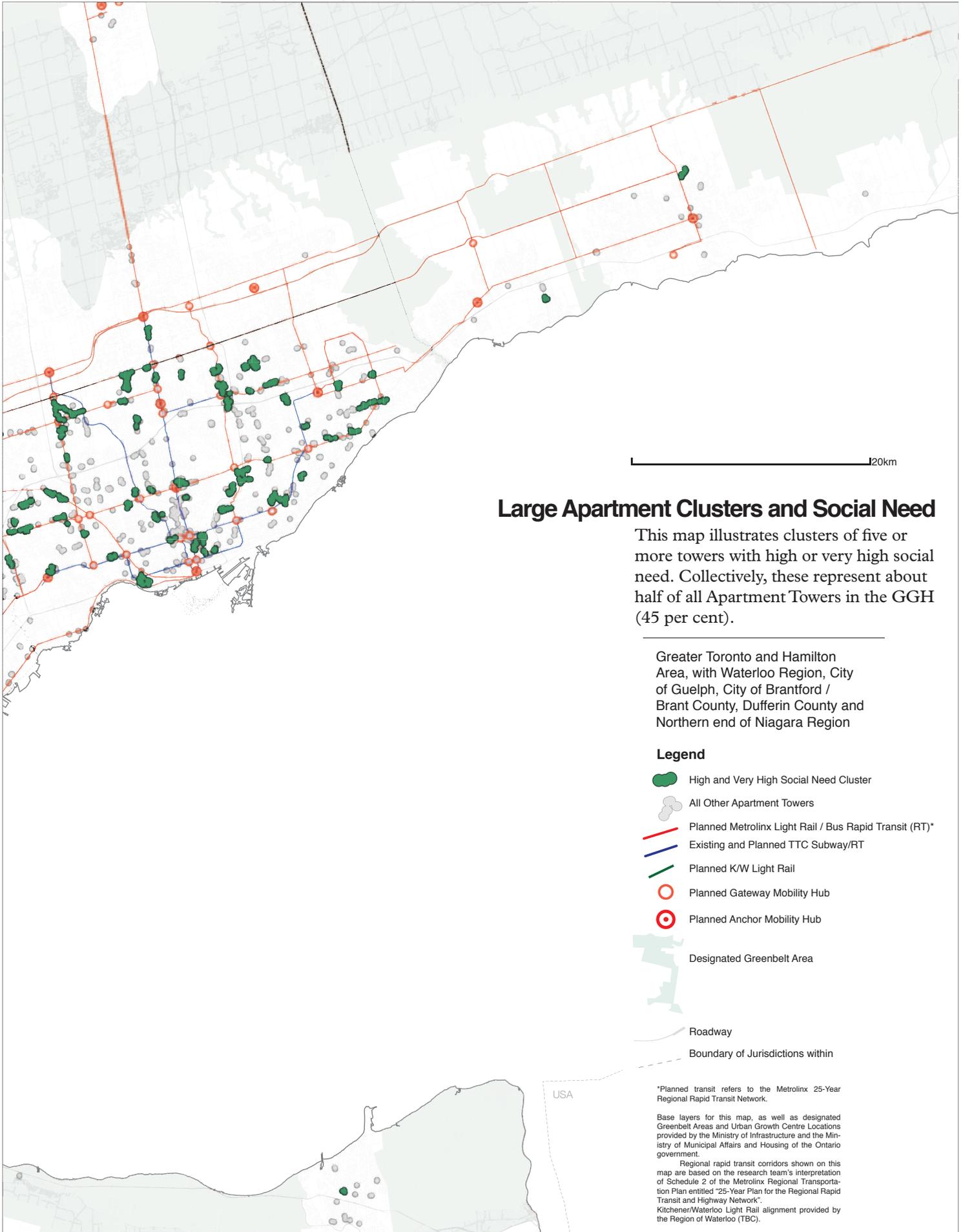
Images

- 01) Refurbished Apartment Block, Former East Berlin, Germany
- 02) New infill 'eco' family housing in Tower Hamlets, East London, UK
- 03) Conversion of ground floor of Apartment Tower to cafe, Moscow, Russia
- 04) Fresh Food Market in Apartment Neighbourhood in Halle Neustadt, Germany



Opportunities 4.2 Tower Neighbourhood Renewal in the Greater Golden Horseshoe





Large Apartment Clusters and Social Need

This map illustrates clusters of five or more towers with high or very high social need. Collectively, these represent about half of all Apartment Towers in the GGH (45 per cent).

Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, with Waterloo Region, City of Guelph, City of Brantford / Brant County, Dufferin County and Northern end of Niagara Region

Legend

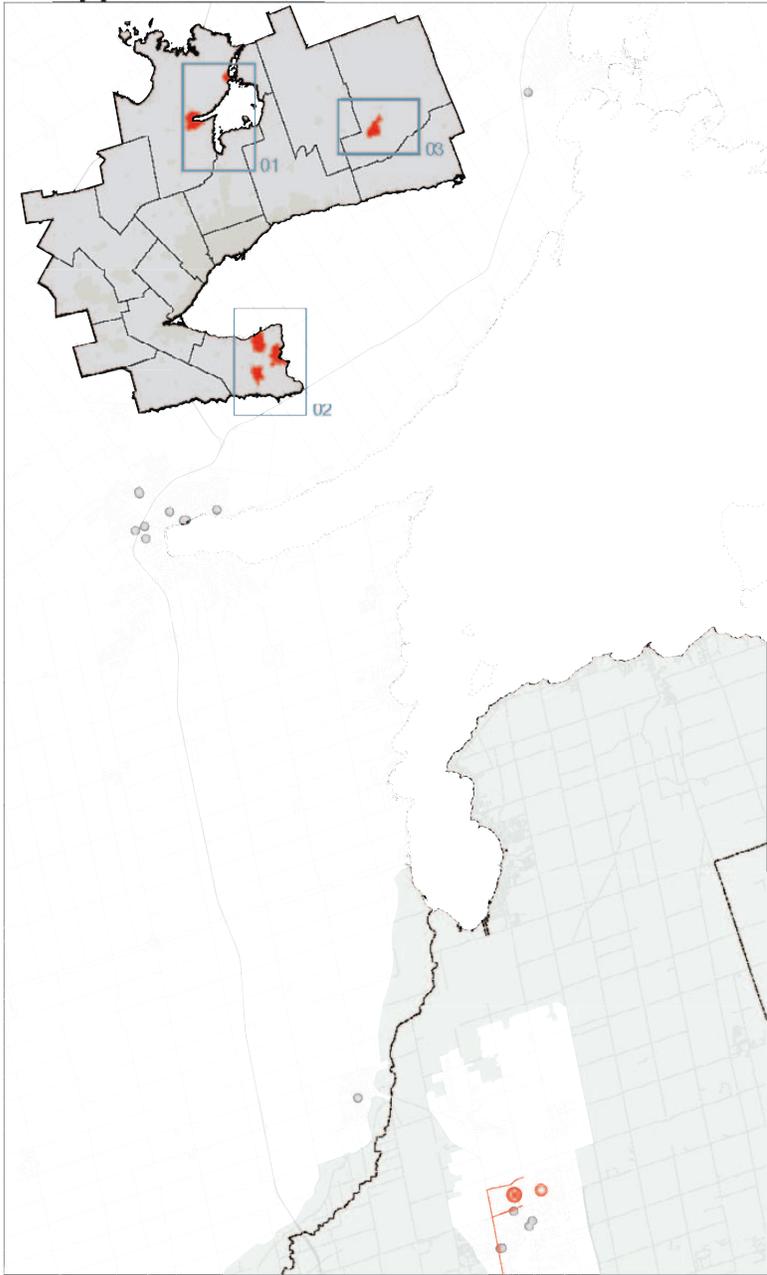
-  High and Very High Social Need Cluster
-  All Other Apartment Towers
-  Planned Metrolinx Light Rail / Bus Rapid Transit (RT)*
-  Existing and Planned TTC Subway/RT
-  Planned K/W Light Rail
-  Planned Gateway Mobility Hub
-  Planned Anchor Mobility Hub
-  Designated Greenbelt Area
-  Roadway
-  Boundary of Jurisdictions within

*Planned transit refers to the Metrolinx 25-Year Regional Rapid Transit Network.

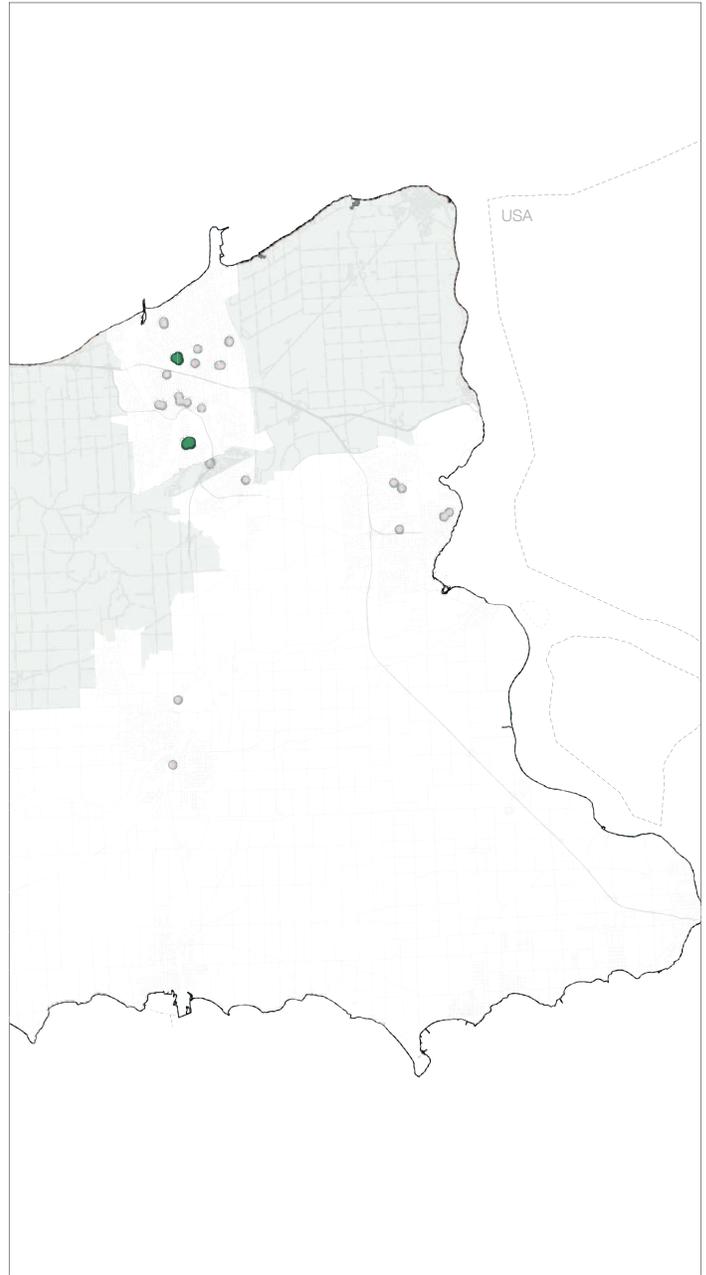
Base layers for this map, as well as designated Greenbelt Areas and Urban Growth Centre Locations provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing of the Ontario government.

Regional rapid transit corridors shown on this map are based on the research team's interpretation of Schedule 2 of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan entitled "25-Year Plan for the Regional Rapid Transit and Highway Network". Kitchener/Waterloo Light Rail alignment provided by the Region of Waterloo (TBC).

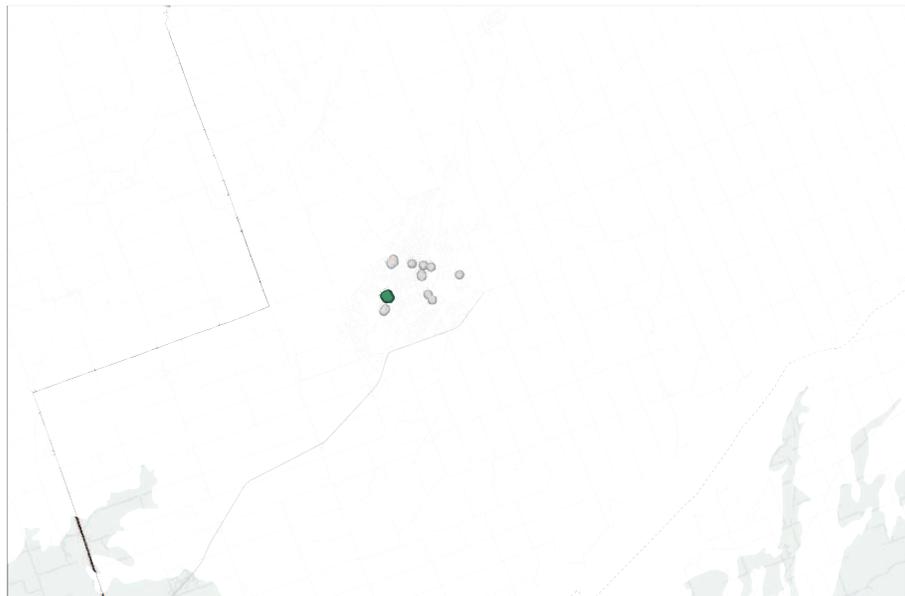
Opportunities 4.2 Tower Neighbourhood Renewal in the Greater Golden Horseshoe



01) Simcoe County



02) Niagara Region



03) City of Peterborough

120km

Legend

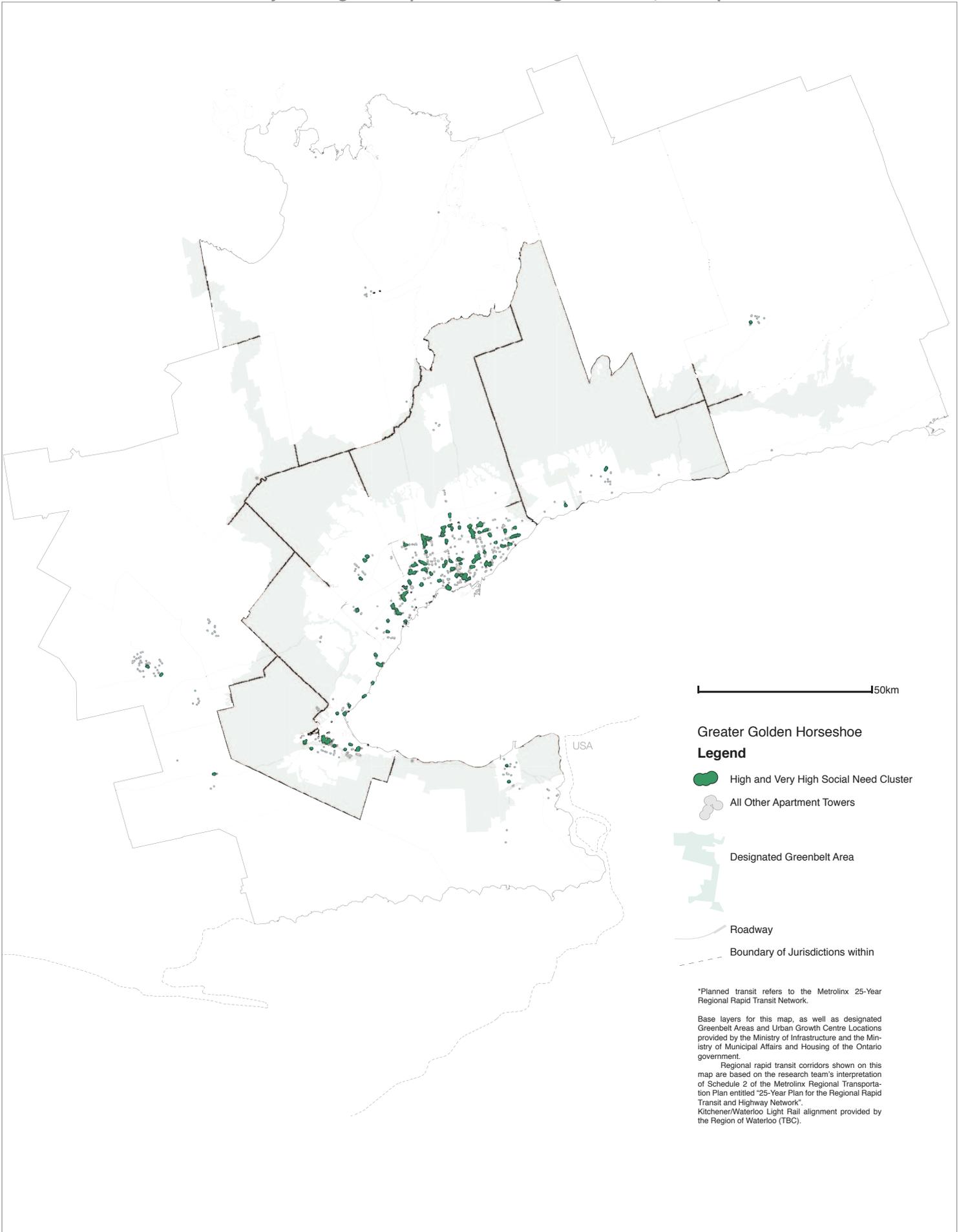
-  High and Very High Social Need Cluster
-  All Other Apartment Towers
-  Planned Metrolinx Light Rail / Busway
-  Existing and Planned TTC Subway/RT
-  Planned K/W Light Rail
-  Planned Gateway Mobility Hub
-  Planned Anchor Mobility Hub
-  Designated Greenbelt Area
-  Roadway
-  Boundary of Jurisdictions within

*Planned transit refers to the Metrolinx 25 Year Regional Rapid Transit Network.

Base layers for this map, as well as designated Greenbelt Areas and Urban Growth Centre Locations provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing of the Ontario government.

Regional rapid transit corridors shown on this map are based on the research team's interpretation of Schedule 2 of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan entitled "25-Year Plan for the Regional Rapid Transit and Highway Network".

Kitchener/Waterloo Light Rail alignment provided by the Region of Waterloo (TBC).



European Best Practices in Social and Community Investment within Apartment Neighbourhoods

Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods across the European Union have experienced significant social investment as part of Tower Neighbourhood Renewal programs. Strategies include the provision of amenities and services responsive to residents' needs, support for grassroots community initiatives, and enabling entrepreneurial opportunities within tower neighbourhoods. This process has improved the access to job opportunities for residents, as well as contributed to community cohesion and neighbourhood pride.

The following are a series of strategies related to social and community investment within Apartment Neighbourhoods, and the pictures on the following page illustrate several examples.

Introducing New Social and Community Services

New community facilities in Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods in Poptahof, Delft (image 01 & 02) and Schulze-Boysen-Straße, Berlin (03), offer residents access to new recreational, educational and social programs as part of a strategy to combat inequality, and elevate the livability of the neighbourhood.

Establishing Community Gathering Places

New public spaces for passive and active recreation are a key component of Tower Neighbourhood Renewal. These sites can host farmers and vendor's markets, as well as community festivals as in the case of Swiss Cottage in London's Camden Borough (05).

Building Common Area Upgrades

The renewal of the Kruitberg Apartment Tower in the Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam consolidates mail boxes at each of the buildings' entrances (04) as a strategy to create space that encourages neighbourliness and a strong sense of community. In Gardsten Göteborg, greenhouses were added to building ground floors, to create year round gardening opportunities (07).

Improving Safety

Improvements to Apartment Towers such as new vestibules and the introduction of a concierge, such as in Berlin's Markisches Viertel, increase resident convenience and perceptions of safety

(08). Visually striking new light fixtures line a new path in Holmbladsgade, Copenhagen as part of a strategy to improve the safety and image of the neighbourhood (06). The path, called 'Prags Boulevard', includes a diverse set of recreational zones along its length, which attract a diversity of users, and injected the neighbourhood with a new vibrancy of which the local residents are extremely proud.

Youth Programming

Brøndby Strand is a neighbourhood in suburban Copenhagen with a large population of youth considered to be at risk. In 2002, at the outset of renewal in the neighbourhood, local boys expressed that they would like to create and run their own meeting place. This idea led to the creation of 'Tranens Dreng' (Crane Boys), a meeting place that offers a range of recreational (09), educational and social programs that has been credited with reducing crime and increasing youth employment rates in the neighbourhood. Much of the success of the project is attributed to the fact that the meeting place was created out of a process of mutual trust, and that the boys were given influence and responsibility.

Local Economic Development

Strategies to create local jobs in the Bijlmermeer operate at different scales. Still under construction, the ArenA district (10) immediately west of the neighbourhood will

bring 50,000 new jobs, and is intended to be a regionally significant employment centre. At a smaller scale, workshop space is incorporated into the base of some of the Apartment Towers in the neighbourhood (11). The organization of markets and the addition of permanent kiosks, can be a vehicle for local businesses, as well as providing needed services to residents.

Combatting Stigmatization

Many Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods in Europe have been stigmatized as undesirable neighbourhoods. Landmark art, public space and community events as part of the renewal process can change perceptions of neighbourhoods, as well as empower residents. An example are building mural walls in Amsterdam's Bijlmermeer (13).

Reception and Integration Resources for Newcomers

The Idea Stores in East London (15 & 16) provide ethnically and linguistically diverse communities with the resources that they need to ease entry into the community and the local economy. The Idea Stores include traditional library lending, a wide range of adult education classes, career support, training, community meeting areas, as well as cafes and facilities for arts and leisure pursuits. The facility also includes retail spaces to facilitate local economic development.

Image

'IdeaStore', Social Service and Community Hub integrated into 'Poplar' Tower Neighbourhood London, UK



European Best Practice
Social investment strategies



01



02



03

- 01) Open air market and new grocery store at base of tower block, Moscow, Russia
- 02) Meeting room in Community resource centre in Poptahof, Delft, NL
- 03) New community centre in Schulze-Boysen-Straße, Berlin, Germany
- 04) Place to meet neighbours, new mailboxes in Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam, NL
- 05) Farmers Market at Swiss Cottage, London, UK
- 06) New lights improve safety and image of Holmbladsgade, Prags Blvd., Copenhagen, DK
- 07) New greenhouse and laundry facility at tower base, Garsten, Göteborg, Sweden
- 08) New entrance improves safety in Markisches Viertel, Berlin, Germany
- 09) Sports programs engage local youth in Brondby Strand, Copenhagen, DK



04



05



06



07



08



09



10



11



12

10) The ground floor of a tower is converted to work space in the Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam, NL
 11) The ArenA district brings 50,000 jobs at the edge of the Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam, NL
 12) In Poptahof, a Kiosk stores play equipment which is rented out to local children in exchange for good deeds in Poptahof, Delft, NL
 13) Public art on the side of a tower helps re-brand the Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam, NL
 14) Signage in Poptahof publicizing the neighbourhoods transformation, Delft, NL
 15) The Idea Stores in East London offer a library, meeting rooms, education and employment resources and other services to the ethnically diverse residents of the Chrisp Street Estate, London, UK
 16) Library / Community Fitness centre, Swiss Cottage, London, UK



13



15



14



16