



# **2024-2026 Strategic Plan**

*Something for Everyone!*

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## Strategic Summary

Cecil Community Centre's 2024-26 strategic plan, created with the support of Evenings & Weekends Consulting, builds on the aspirations and intentions of the organization's previous strategic plan, which covered the years 2016-20. As the gap between those sets of dates might suggest, the new plan is oriented towards building fresh capacity after the emergency period of the ongoing pandemic.

This strategic plan was developed out of a sequence of consultations with Cecil's staff, board, program participants, and other service users. Its conclusions are rooted in the perspectives, experiences, and desires of those constituency groups. An overview of what we heard during consultations was presented to Cecil leadership in April 2024 and is included as an appendix to this document.

Cecil's previous strategic plan described the organization as in the *Growth* phase of its organizational life cycle. Those consulted during the development of the new plan suggested they feel that's still the case. So what might sustainable growth look like for Cecil Community Centre over the next three years, during a period when cost-of-living pressures, historic levels of immigration, and a persistent housing crisis mean demand for Cecil's community-building and needs-meeting services is likely to grow?

The following strategic priorities seek to chart a generative path forward.

1. **Expanding and Optimizing Cecil's Physical Space(s)**
2. **Improving Communications and Visibility**
3. **Deepening Support for High-Need Community Members**
4. **Advancing Staff Culture & Experience**

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### Strategic Goal 1: Expanding and Optimizing Cecil's Physical Space(s)

Cecil Community Centre's continued growth is dependent on the availability of appropriate additional space(s) that can accommodate the various programs and services offered.

Cecil Centre will **operate from at least one additional location**, potentially called the **Cecil Street Family Centre**, which houses children and youth programs (including the Youth Lounge), the EarlyON Family Resource Centre, and a childcare centre. New spaces can be co-located, leased, owned, or any combination of these.

To meet our goal we will:

- Continue to balance the needs of different service user groups in a safe, equitable way, including through improving the spatial arrangement of activities for those groups, so groups with conflicting needs can be hosted in distinct spaces.
- Advance Cecil's expansion to one or more additional locations and/or expansionary renovations to the organization's current facilities.
- Work to improve the accessibility of Cecil's physical space – for example, using humidifiers in the basement in particular, and implementing air purifiers throughout the building to combat the ongoing risk of poor air quality, COVID-19, and other respiratory threats.
- Support Cecil's space expansions, as well as its other priorities, by growing unrestricted/undesignated funding to improve operational sustainability, in part through acquiring a charitable registration number, and building on Cecil's existing Resource Development Strategy.

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## \* Strategic Goal 2: Improving Communications and Visibility

While the Centre's impact in the community has been acknowledged, there is still a large number of community stakeholders who are not aware of the programs, services and activities available at Cecil.

Cecil Community Centre will **develop a Marketing and Communications Strategy** which includes objectives, messages, benefits to the community, barriers, resources, and an evaluation process. We will review our brand, update our website and create marketing tools to increase our visibility, and develop a relationship with at least one news media outlet, making them your champion in telling our story to the larger community.

To meet our goal we will:

- Resource Cecil's staff team – including a potential new hire with a communications focus – to develop and implement a fresh communications strategy that prioritizes regularly updating community members on Cecil's offerings and how to access them.
- Grow Cecil's public image, including through regular updates to the Cecil website and impactful social media posts, and potentially – if resources allow – through advertisements in high-traffic public spaces.
- Create increased mechanisms, potentially including confidential ones, for both staff and community members to share their feedback.
- Continue to engage community partners and explore possibilities for strategic collaboration, in part to extend Cecil's visibility and reach.

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## \* Strategic Goal 3: Deepening Support for High-Need Community Members

One of the largest areas of growth for Cecil Centre is the unhoused population, and people living with mental health and addictions. By developing a deeper understanding of how certain groups are marginalized, Cecil Community Centre will **expand our Housing and Community Supports functions** to include staff expertise, partnerships and collaborations, and advocacy.

To meet our goal we will:

- Implement a trauma-informed, strengths-based anti-oppressive framework to guide operational decision-making, helping to clarify definitions of power, oppression, and privilege, especially in moments when there are multiple legitimate social needs in tension with each other.
- Apply an anti-oppressive, anti-carceral lens while shoring up Cecil Community Centre's security provisions.
- Conduct community needs assessments, with a particular view to assessing how to prioritize the organization's programs and services focused on housing, employment, and newcomer settlement – social needs likely to grow in the next three years, based on current economic and demographic trends.
- Ensure that all programs are adequately resourced with funding and staff, with an emphasis on sustaining (and/or sustainably expanding) seniors' programs to meet the needs of an aging population, and on exploring the possibility of developing an in-school aftercare program.

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 Strategic Goal 4: **Advancing Staff Culture & Experience**

Employee engagement is the extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work. Cecil Community Centre management will create a framework and tool to assess employee engagement, and use the results to **develop a comprehensive *Employee Engagement Strategy***.

To meet our goal we will:

- Clarify, document, and communicate internal policies and procedures to improve work culture and mitigate the risk of staff burnout.
- Enhance training for all staff, including de-escalation and conflict management training in particular.
- Advance a strategy for staff succession-planning, especially in relation to program staff.
- Work towards reinstating a dedicated volunteer coordinator role, to lighten the time and energy demands of volunteer coordination required of other staff.
- Work towards paying all staff a thriving wage, with the goal of attracting and retaining highly skilled and dedicated team members.

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 **Something for Everyone...**

#### Vision Statement

*All residents living in Toronto's Spadina and College (Kensington-Chinatown) neighbourhood enjoy a high quality of life; are able to achieve their economic, social, and educational goals; and are part of a strong and caring local community.*

#### Mission

*To foster a sense of community and enhance quality of life for local residents, through programs and activities responsive to their needs.*

#### Core Values

The six core values that drive the mission of Cecil Community Centre are:

1. **Respectful, Inclusive Community-Building** – We are committed to ensuring that the programs, services, and policies of Cecil Community Centre are responsive to the needs of our diverse community and accessible to all.
2. **Integrity & Accountability** – We are committed to operating this Centre with integrity and transparency in all our partnerships, relationships, and operations, fully accountable to the community and our partners for our financial, operational, and governing decisions.
3. **Adaptability** – We are committed to identifying and responding dynamically to our community's shifting needs.
4. **Sustainability** – We are committed to ensuring the fiscal and social sustainability of this Centre.
5. **Creativity** – We are committed to the encouragement of creative expressions of community, culture, arts, leisure, and health and wellness programs within this Centre.
6. **Service** – We are committed to serving the community in all the operations, programs, and events that take place within this Centre.