

# Master Plan Principles

Ryerson  
University





# Introduction

Ryerson University thrives on change. As Ryerson is interwoven with established and emerging communities, continually evolving retail hubs, modern civic spaces and historic streets, it is both a partner and a leader in realizing positive change in downtown Toronto. This institution is porous, overlapped and inseparable from the evolution of its neighbours and partners. The ideas set out in this Master Plan Principles document support the vision of Ryerson as a leading innovation university and as a city builder.

The Master Plan Principles document is a gateway into the principles that continue to guide campus development today. It is designed to be an accessible and graphically updated tool to help the community understand our approach to city building and managing change.

Since the principles in the Master Plan were set out in 2008, much has happened. Ryerson's enrollment has grown 32 per cent since 2008, further illustrating the transformation of this downtown neighbourhood. Even with this exciting growth and change, the Master Plan Principles remain current.

Ryerson has made strides to advance the principles of "Urban Intensification" – the first of three goals of the Master Plan Principles. The Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex (expected in 2018) combines student housing, academic uses, retail, and pedestrian connections, resulting in the transformation of an underutilized lot into a vertical campus.

Many exciting moments in Ryerson's story relate to the second goal of the Master Plan – "People first – pedestrianization of the urban environment."

In 2012, an ambitious student-driven initiative redefined public life on campus by successfully closing a segment of Gould Street to vehicle traffic. This new pedestrianized area created a natural relationship with the active ground floor of the Image Arts Building and Ryerson Image Centre, a remarkable contribution to placemaking in its own right. Ryerson intends to proceed with further efforts to enhance the pedestrian experience on Gould Street and other key areas of the public realm.

"A commitment to design excellence" – the third goal of the Master Plan, is most evident in projects that raise the standard of what a public institution can be. The Student Learning Centre marks Ryerson's gateway to Yonge Street with a design that prioritizes the needs of students while openly engaging with its surroundings. Our flexible study areas create inspiring spaces for a variety of needs, earning the building a host of international awards (visit **ryersonbuilds.ryerson.ca** for more). The exterior lighting features of the Image Arts Building and the photo exhibitions of the Ryerson Image Centre remind us of the importance of inspiration in university life, both inside and outside the buildings. The repurposing of historic Maple Leaf Gardens into the mixed-use Mattamy Athletic Centre demonstrates a sensitivity to cultural history and underscores the connection between Ryerson and the surrounding context.

The Master Plan Principles will continue to provide guidance for how Ryerson grows as a neighbour and city builder while working to continuously improve the learning environment for students.



# Contents

## 2 Introduction

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### 4 Goal 1: Urban intensification

#### Principles

- 5 The campus within the city
- 5 Understanding the urban context: seams
- 7 Re-centralization
- 7 Defining boundaries
- 8 Land banking
- 8 Potential development sites
- 8 Density analysis
- 9 Honouring history
- 9 The housing network
- 9 Housing typologies
- 10 An architectural framework for urban intensification

### 11 Goal 2: People first – pedestrianization of the urban environment

#### Principles

- 12 Public transit opportunities
- 12 Defining the public realm core
- 13 Activating the street: the campus as cultural and social ground plane
- 14 Retail – a focus for student life
- 14 Reducing cars and improving pedestrian and cycling opportunities
- 14 Pedestrianizing laneways

### 15 Goal 3: A commitment to design excellence

#### Principles

- 16 Translating the Academic Plan
- 16 Building the vertical campus
- 16 Overlapping campus and city
- 17 Sustainability
- 17 Affirming the Ryerson identity
- 18 Marking an entrance and creating an architectural identity

# Goal 1:

## Urban intensification

Create a vital central zone in the precinct and invest in the urban seams by strategically intensifying them within a defined Ryerson University precinct. Investigate strategies for building the vertical campus in an urban environment, making efficient use of small and valuable urban properties and provide transparency and accessibility at grade, enhancing a strong sense of collegiality.



## The campus within the city

Take advantage of the strategic location of Ryerson University, and its demands and opportunities within the city's urban context. Densify the campus and increase its visibility in relation to its surroundings.

### Understanding the urban context: seams

Identify seams in the urban context for strategic intensification of the campus to take full advantage of opportunities for programs to integrate with surrounding context, including existing neighbourhoods, key institutions, retail uses and employers.

#### Parks and public spaces

Ryerson University sits in proximity to many urban open spaces such as Allan Gardens, Yonge-Dundas Square, and College Park. Ryerson's Quad and its other open spaces have the potential to become part of an emerging network of improved and linked downtown green spaces. Yonge, Jarvis, Dundas and Gerrard Streets are some of the major seams connecting parks and public spaces to the university.

#### Government institutions

One of Ryerson's great strengths is its proximity to major civic and cultural institutions including Toronto City Hall, Queen's Park and Osgoode Hall Law School. Bay, Jarvis and Dundas Streets are some of the major seams connecting government institutions to the university.

#### Commercial and retail district

The Ryerson campus sits to the east of a strip of retail along Yonge Street, and adjacent to the Toronto Eaton Centre, one of Canada's strongest retail environments. The area has a strong and active Business Improvement Area (BIA) dedicated to the enhancement of the district. Yonge-Dundas Square and the multi-cinema retail development are intended to raise the quality of retail along Yonge Street. Yonge and Dundas Streets are some of the major seams connecting the university to the commercial and retail district of the city.

#### Financial district – offices

The university is also located within walking distance of the financial district of Toronto, as well as many other major employers. Yonge and Bay Streets are essential seams connecting Ryerson University to major businesses and institutions in the city.

#### Health care, engineering and science

Ryerson's health-care programs benefit from strong ties to nearby institutions including St. Michael's Hospital and the health sciences and hospital cluster on University Avenue. Dundas, Gerrard, Elm and Victoria Streets are some of the major seams connecting the university to the health-care network.







### Social services

The campus is located in an area of the city in close proximity to many of Toronto's social services agencies. The university has already established numerous partnerships with its programs and the community. To enhance this strong relationship, the Master Plan identifies Gerrard, Yonge and Church Streets as some of the most important urban seams for future expansion of Ryerson's programs which benefit from this inherent partnership.

### Entertainment, arts and culture

Ryerson programs in hospitality and the arts benefit from immediate proximity to related activities at the periphery of the campus. A number of theatres in the area are available for rental. Dundas, Yonge and Victoria Streets are some of the major seams connecting the university to the entertainment, cultural and hospitality establishments of the city.

### University housing

While on the edge of older established neighbourhoods to the east and within a burgeoning downtown condominium market, Ryerson faces unique challenges in providing housing for students. Additional undergraduate and graduate housing on or near the campus is therefore desirable. Dundas, Gerrard, Church, Jarvis and Mutual Streets are some of the major seams connecting the university to housing and residential neighbourhoods.



## Re-centralization

Strike a balance between decentralization and centralization by proposing a reinvention of the campus, creating a vital central zone in the campus precinct, and by investing in the seams of the urban context.

## Defining boundaries

The Master Plan defines the Ryerson University campus, the academic precinct, as well as the housing precinct within the overall urban context. Although the boundaries are flexible and can adjust over time, they help clarify and prioritize development projects.

### Ryerson University campus

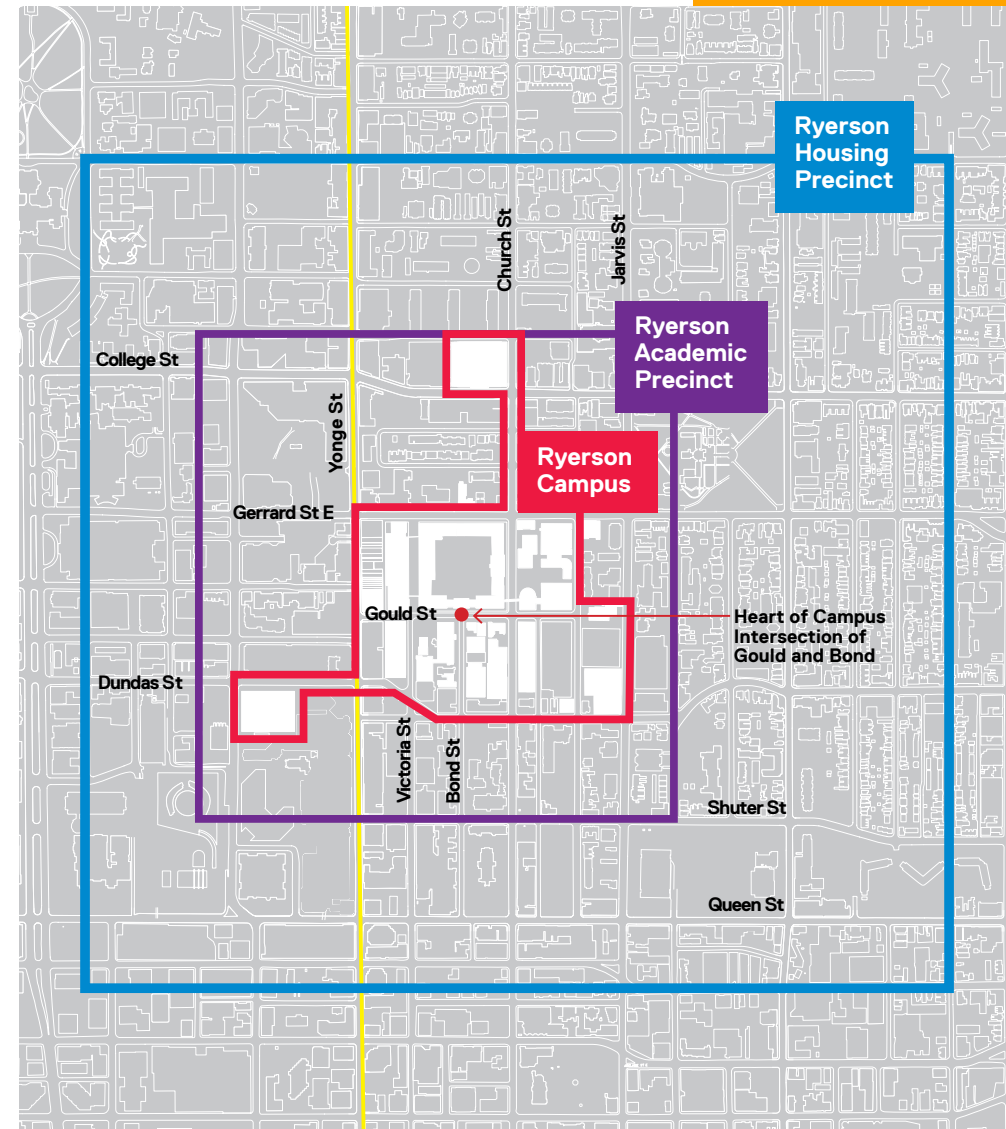
This is the most immediate context of the campus today – the adjacent street network over which Ryerson can implement the program of recognizable public realm upgrades that include new sidewalk and street landscape standards, signage and multifunctional light poles, Ryerson University street furniture, etc. This area will change over time as Ryerson expands its land holdings.

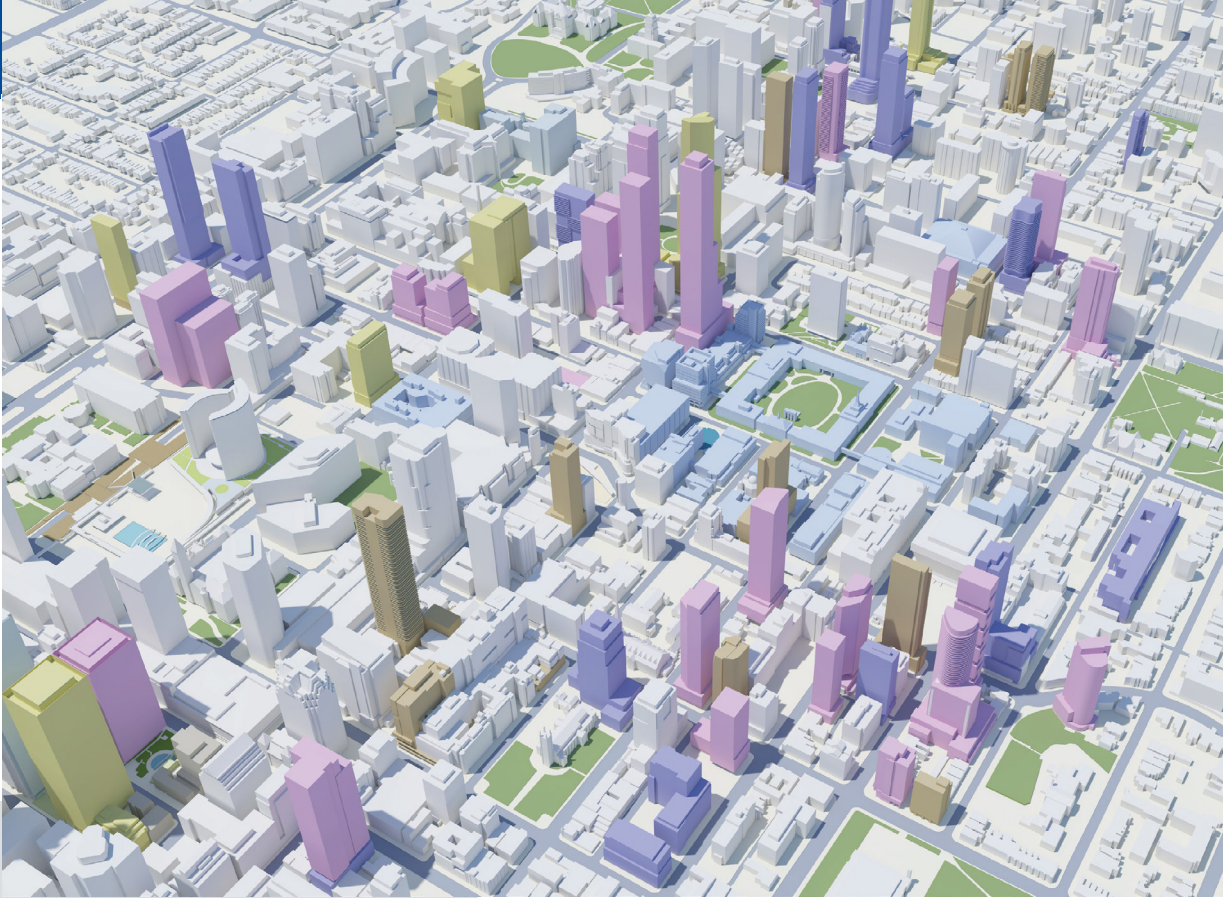
### Ryerson University academic precinct

This is the area of the city defined by a 10-minute walk between classes. Its boundaries are just north of College/ Carlton Street to the north, just west of Bay Street to the west, Shuter Street to the south, and just east of Jarvis Street to the east.

### Ryerson University housing precinct

This is the area of the city in which university student and faculty housing can be developed to fulfil the objectives of enriching the university experience by providing accommodation within an easy walk of the centre of the campus and its academic, social and recreational amenities. This area is broadly defined by a 20-minute walk to the campus. Its boundaries are Wellesley Street to the north, just east of University Avenue to the west, Richmond Street to the south, and just west of Parliament Street to the east.



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- Recently constructed
  - Under construction
  - Approved applications
  - Submitted applications

Ryerson area development activity as of April 2016. See City of Toronto Development Projects [site](#) for updated information.

### Land banking

As opportunities arise and properties become available, the university will consider purchasing land today for the Ryerson University of tomorrow.

### Potential development sites

The university will show interest as a neighbour in the developments of other sites in proximity to the Ryerson precinct and will use the framework of the Master Plan as a tool to help influence the quality of such developments.

### Density analysis

Take advantage of the unused density on Ryerson University's own lands to meet academic space needs and revitalize the core of the campus while preserving the iconic green spaces of the university (e.g., the Quad).



## Honouring history

Create harmonic relationships between symbolically and historically important elements of the original campus and contemporary new developments for the Ryerson of tomorrow. Acknowledge, study, and work with the heritage fabric of the city.

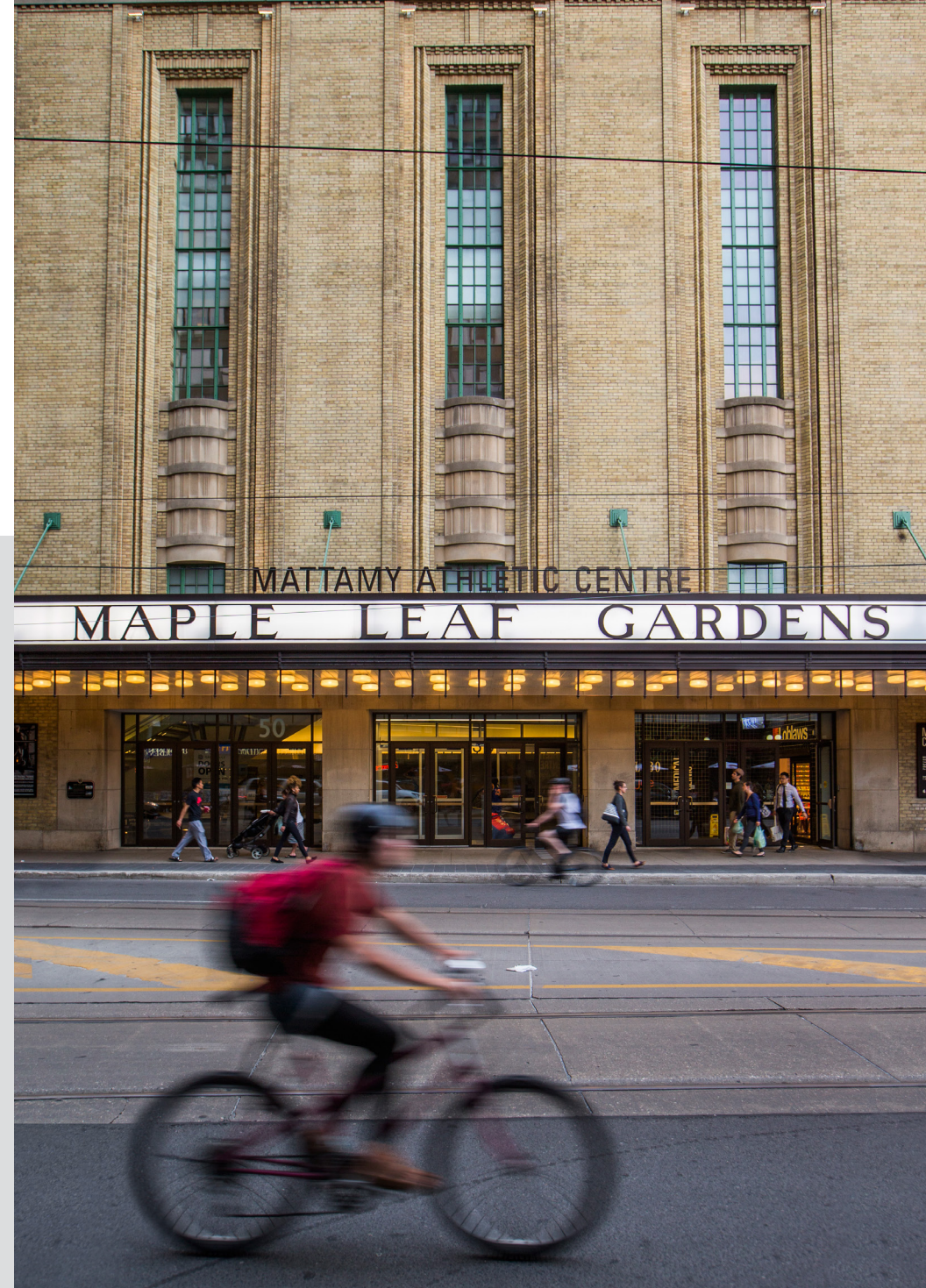
## The housing network

Encourage housing within the Ryerson housing precinct for students, faculty, and staff. Consider opportunities to provide affordable student housing along subway lines and to expand housing options according to identified needs.

## Housing typologies

Encourage a convivial housing community which includes various options and typologies such as low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise developments. Shared interior and exterior amenities and learning spaces which activate and strengthen a sense of collegiality are important.

The redevelopment of Maple Leaf Gardens into the Mattamy Athletic Centre is an innovative transformation of a National Historic Site into a modern mixed-use landmark.





## An Architectural framework for urban intensification

### 1 The vertical campus

Explore opportunities to create the vertical campus and hence to maximize density in the Ryerson precinct, optimizing use of scarce and valuable urban land. Maintain a sense of community within the vertical campus through the creation of small academic neighborhoods within a larger one.

### 2 Sustainability, the programmable green roof

Investigate options to create a programmable, habitable, safe green roof options.

### 3 The podium, teaching and flexible lab spaces

Program the podium (floors two to four) of any development with highly active spaces such as teaching, and provide tall, robust, loft-like spaces which are flexible and adaptable over time to various types of academic needs.

### 4 The active and transparent ground plane

Provide transparency and accessibility at grade, as well as programs that are conducive to social interaction and enhance a strong sense of collegiality.

### 5 Implementation strategy: the co-development program

Explore possibilities to partner with the private sector and create co-developments which would exploit the unused density within the Ryerson precinct while helping to fund the university's expansion.



Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex



## Goal 2: People first – pedestrianization of the urban environment

Create a distinctive public realm which defines the Ryerson University precinct within its urban context, enhances the vitality of all green open spaces, streets and sidewalks, promotes a collegial pedestrian environment within the university, and enhances accessibility to the campus by increasing public transit opportunities.

## Public transit opportunities

Enhance accessibility to the campus by increasing public transit opportunities. Establish underground connections, where possible, to Toronto's underground pedestrian PATH system and its proposed expansion to enhance accessibility to the campus from various transit hubs in the city.

## Defining the public realm core

Define the public realm core of the campus through signature elements of landscape, urban furniture, and lighting to create a cohesive collegial sense of community identifiable in the urban context.

### Street furniture

Customize street furniture to define the boundaries of Ryerson's primary public spaces and to assert the distinctiveness of this area within the city.

### Street lighting

Develop a consistent approach to street lighting within the Ryerson University campus which clearly defines the boundaries of the precinct. This approach relates to quality of light, environmentally sustainable lighting, design of the lamp standards, and artistic lighting strategies.



The Ryerson Public Realm Plan (concept images shown here) provides the tools to implement many of the Master Plan's Goal 2 principles. The focus of this plan is to improve safety, accessibility and quality of place.





### Landscape signature and linkages

Create a 'signature' Ryerson landscape that consists of planting strategies that enhance the character of the public realm, providing a unique environment within the precinct.

Design a tight pedestrian-oriented core to the campus with an environment conducive to academic excellence and vibrant student life. Develop a comfortable pedestrian microclimate in the core of the campus inclusive of sun/shade conditions and wind levels.

Reinforce existing visual and pedestrian hubs within the campus and create new ones. Create a series of "desire lines" that make walking across the campus easy and pleasurable. Through visual connections, physical urban landscapes, lighting, urban furniture and branding, extend beyond the precinct and continuously aim at linking

the core of the campus to satellite locations and future developments along the university seams.

### Activating the street: the campus as cultural and social ground plane

Create an active and transparent ground plane with university student-focused activities such as student services, registration, student study spaces, cafés and snack bars that stay open late to welcome evening students. Increase visibility and the opportunity for interchange. Apply Canadian urbanist and writer Jane Jacobs' thesis that more "eyes on the street" increase a sense of community and belonging and as a byproduct, a populated, safe and secure environment.





## Retail – a focus for student life

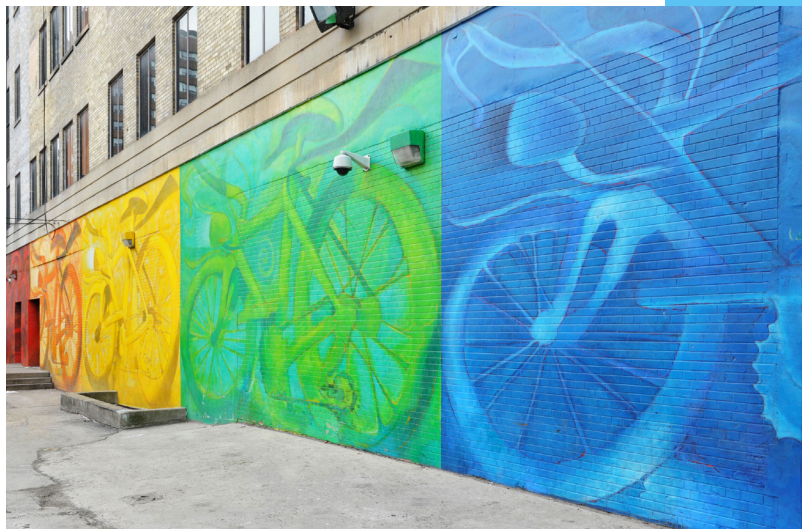
Activate the street by providing small-scale retail at grade which directly responds to the needs of students, faculty, and staff.

## Reducing cars and improving pedestrian and cycling opportunities

Enhance “green” accessibility to the campus by establishing designated cycling lanes throughout the campus which connect to the city’s proposed cycling network. Interior bicycle storage within developments would reinforce this commitment.

## Pedestrianizing laneways

Identify the laneways within the Ryerson University precinct and introduce elements of the public realm – such as lighting, street furniture, and landscaping – to integrate them as part of the public space network of the university.





# Goal 3:

## A commitment to design excellence

Expand Ryerson University's academic and student-focused spaces to provide new and improved state-of-the-art spaces for teaching, laboratories for research in multiple disciplines, student study space, and student facilities.



## Translating the Academic Plan

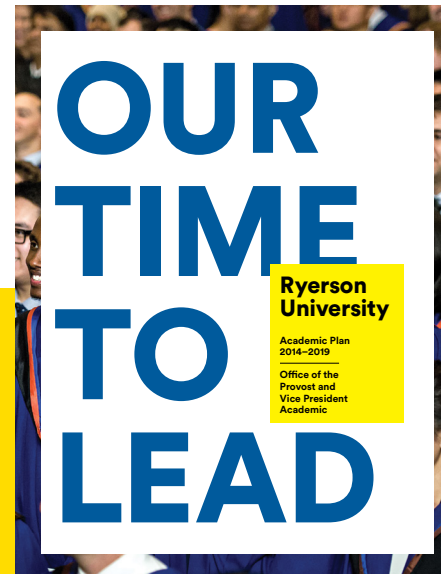
Create buildings and public spaces for the university that are primarily inspirational learning and teaching environments which translate Ryerson's Academic Plan 2014-2019, Our Time to Lead, while continuously offering both daytime and evening students a sense of belonging to a strong, vibrant academic community. Make good on the Academic Plan's priority to expand community engagement and city building.

## Building the vertical campus

Create configurations that allow for transparency and access to light within the vertical campus. These spaces should create chambers for natural ventilation, promote the penetration of natural light into the interior spaces, and act as social networking lounges, where the easily accessible open staircases and elevators encourage interaction between floors.

## Overlapping campus and city

Build on Ryerson University's reputation as a city builder by ensuring that every aspect of the campus development recognizes the opportunity to display the accomplishments of the university and to integrate the urban community within campus life, creating synergies and interdependence between the university and its neighbours.







Integrate sustainability and stewardship of the environment with every gesture of the Master Plan going forward. Ryerson will commit to the appropriate accreditation and, in keeping with the many green initiatives the university has taken to date, continue to evolve its own green standards for energy usage, renewable energy sources, garbage recycling, encouragement of public transit over vehicle usage, green roofs and storm water management, green landscape, etc.

Ryerson University introduced a dynamic refreshed brand to the community in the fall of 2015. Guided by the principles of the university's Academic Plan, our new brand positions Ryerson at the intersection of mind and action. Ryerson's community now has access to a formalized brand strategy, identity system, in-depth graphic standards, tools and templates, and a refreshed logo.





## Marking an entrance and creating an architectural identity

Create gateways to the campus through various media which clearly identify Ryerson University within its urban context, while communicating and displaying to the neighbouring community the Ryerson brand, the work of students, faculty and staff, as well as public events of the university. Create architectural identity through the design of new developments.

