

# Unveiling the future: Ontario Teachers' new workplace

160 Front St. West is a culmination of a multi-year project to create a workspace that drives collaboration, engagement and sustainability



## At a glance

- Ontario Teachers' new downtown Toronto headquarters reflects our commitment to innovation, inclusivity and sustainability.
- The office design emphasizes flexibility and adaptability and offers a variety of workspaces to meet individual and team needs while encouraging collaboration and incorporating seamless technology for hybrid work.
- The principles of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are integrated into every aspect of the building's operation and design.
- Our workplace incorporates smart building technology to enhance operational efficiency. It also incorporates a lower carbon cooling solution through our district energy services partner Enwave and targets LEED Gold certification

## A workplace that reflects our values

This spring, Ontario Teachers' will be moving to a new landmark building in downtown Toronto. Located at the corner of Front and Simcoe Streets, the 47-storey, 1.2-million-square-foot office space boasts a distinctive, asymmetrical design.



Beyond its architectural distinction, our new downtown headquarters represents years of dedication and strategic planning. The project was developed by [Cadillac Fairview](#), Ontario Teachers' Canadian real estate subsidiary, to reflect our commitment to attracting and retaining top talent, strengthening our advantage with partners and fostering innovation.

We sat down with George Konidis, Ontario Teachers' Managing Director, Real Estate & Workplace Transformation, to discuss the overall vision for the new building and how it speaks to Ontario Teachers' values and aspirations for the future.

## What was the overall vision for the new workplace?



**George Konidis:** The vision is all about creating a workplace that brings our brand and culture in line with our physical workplace. We wanted to make sure our offices reflect innovation, inclusivity and insightfulness for both current and future employees. To do so, we took a holistic approach to creating an optimal environment for our employees with the notion of connecting people, space and technology to act synchronously as one. The principles of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) along with well-being and sustainability, are infused throughout the space. Our goal is to create an environment where everyone is comfortable bringing their “whole self” to work.

## What are some of the defining characteristics of the project's workspaces?

**GK:** The emphasis on flexibility and choice in work styles stand out as one of the building's key features. The building's design is based on a global workplace strategy with the goal of enhancing the employee experience and attracting top talent. With that in mind, we designed the workspaces at 160 Front St. W. to be highly adaptable, offering options to meet both individual and team needs — and recognizing that those needs may change from person to person and from day to day depending on the tasks at hand.



The design also encourages employees to work together in designated “collaboration areas,” such as meeting rooms, event spaces and casual open collaborative seating meant to spark creativity. These spaces create an environment that's conducive to teamwork and community-building. One example is our multifunctional shared conference centre facility. With its striking views, the space can be used for anything from ad-hoc gatherings and planned events to employee training and smaller meetings.

No matter where employees choose to work, seamless technology will enable them to “plug and play,” allowing them to hop between workspaces — a critical benefit for organizations in the age of hybrid work models. With reliable Wi-Fi connections and access to power, an employee only needs to carry their laptop and they'll be ready to work in seconds. Lastly, the building is defined by its amenities for employees and visitors: business lounges with access to Wi-Fi, easy-to-set-up and universal AV infrastructure, storage for out-of-town employees or guests, focus rooms and more.

## Additional workplace highlights

- ✓ The interior spaces were created with intention to lower energy, water and other resource use, encourage recycling and promoting access to natural light, improved air quality and temperature control.
- ✓ Our partnership with [Second Harvest](#) in Toronto enables us to donate unused food to a cause helping to alleviate food scarcity in the local community.
- ✓ The building's underground facility is equipped with EV charging stations and bicycle storage.



## How does the building design intentionally enhance the principles of DEI?

**GK:** Our building design isn't just about walls and floors — it's about creating a space where everyone is welcomed and valued. One way we've done this is by thoughtfully integrating features that champion DEI.

Accessibility is a big priority for us. You'll find wide corridors that can easily accommodate mobility devices, as well as automatic doors and wheelchair-accessible counter heights. Signs throughout the workspace were also designed to include braille. Additionally, we've made sure that there are single-occupancy bathrooms which are gender-neutral and barrier-free on every floor. We've also outfitted the building with configurable furniture that can adapt to anyone's needs, whether someone prefers a standing desk or needs extra lumbar support.

The new workplace also has dedicated wellness suites for peaceful areas and multi-faith spaces for prayer, meditation or other spiritual practices. It has a dedicated parents' lounge reflecting our commitment to the well-being of employees juggling work and family life. The floors and spaces in between have also been designed to encourage movement, productivity and well-being and we are targeting [WELL Building standard certification](#).

We also partnered with the [Downie Wenjack Fund](#) to create a [Legacy Space](#) dedicated to education and learning about our path to Indigenous reconciliation. In short, our building isn't just a place to work — it's a place where everyone is seen, heard and valued.

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## What steps did you take to increase environmental sustainability in the building's construction and operations?

**GK:** From early on, we committed to making our new workspace an efficient, environmentally sustainable building. For example, our district energy services partner [Enwave](#) will provide our building with a lower carbon cooling solution.

Cadillac Fairview is designed to meet “Platinum” certification for the exterior space of the building from the [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#), an international symbol of sustainability excellence. We've also targeted LEED “Gold” certification for the areas occupied by Ontario Teachers'. The LEED guidelines have been instrumental in our efforts to lower carbon emissions, conserve resources and reduce operating costs. Attaining the prestigious Platinum level shows our dedication to meeting the highest industry standards of sustainability.

In addition to LEED, the new workplace also incorporates “smart building” technology to enhance our operational efficiency such as occupancy sensors in meeting rooms. Furthermore, we leveraged Cadillac Fairview's award-winning “Green at Work” program to integrate sustainability into property management and operations. The program is focused on three pillars: wellness, climate action and resource protection, such as waste and water management. Sustainability isn't just a goal for us; it's a fundamental principle guiding our actions and decisions.