The Data-Driven Main Street: Rethinking Local Decisions in Canada

Public Sector and BIAs Panel



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Main streets talk…

… through foot traffic, spending patterns, and who's browsing versus buying.

They tell us which communities are vibrant, and which need some TLC.

They tell us where the business mix works, and which neighbourhoods become destinations.

They tell us about the local cultures, traditions, and quirks of their neighbourhoods.

We listen through data.

Main streets are where the local economy happens

85%
of Canadians live within one kilometre of a main street

280,000
businesses on Canadian main streets

1.9M
jobs those businesses provide

$300B
in annual revenue

Someone has to make the decisions

The world's first Business Improvement Area was created in Toronto's Bloor West Village in 1970. The model has since been adopted by roughly 500 communities across Canada.

Mostly on volunteer boards and thin budgets

BIAs decide where the levy goes: streetscape, safety, marketing, events. Historically, those calls were made on merchant impressions, point-in-time surveys, pedestrian traffic counters, and seasonal assumptions.

Main street figures: Canadian Urban Institute, Measuring Main Streets (2025).

Measuring Main Streets: giving the main street a unit of analysis



A national method, not a sample	Business and road-network data combined to identify primary commercial streets across the whole country — every main street in Canada, at the local level.
The first tool to treat a main street as the unit	Housing, services, civic infrastructure, employment, commuting and visitor patterns, all evaluated at main street scale rather than city or census scale.
Built with partners, funded for research	Developed by CUI with Environics Analytics and Open North, funded by the Research Knowledge Initiative of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada.

What Environics Analytics puts underneath it

Movement

MobileScapes — visit volumes, day-of-week and hour-of-day patterns, and visitor home locations

MobileScapes

Expenditure

Household expenditure by category, benchmarked against the wider market

FoodSpend HouseholdSpend

People

Neighbourhood demographics and household counts for the catchment

DemoStats PRIZM®

Business base

Establishment counts by type, plus an Independent Business Index

BusinessProfiles

Media

Platform and channel usage, so a campaign can be planned on the district, not the national average

Opticks powered by Numeris

Available to every main street

All five layers, for any main street in the country.

A clear view of the visiting population, lifestyles, movement, buying habits and how to reach them.

EA CONNECT 2026

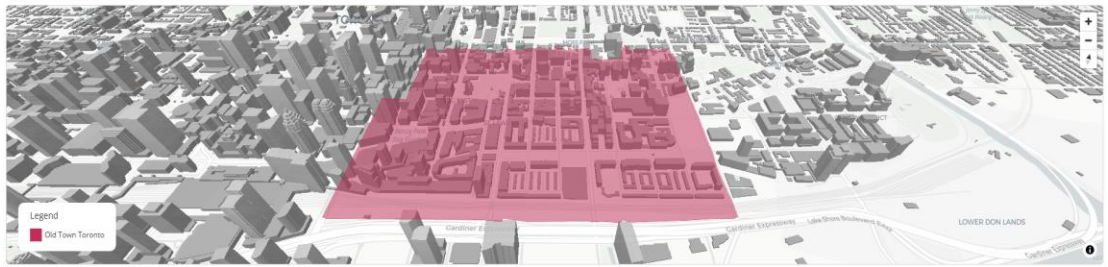
Main Street Canada
Rue Principale Canada

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Home Visitors Local Infrastructure Neighbourhood Profile Sales

Old Town Toronto

Welcome to the Old Town Toronto Main Street Metrics Dashboard! This dashboard provides an overview of the area's characteristics and performance. On this page, you'll find an interactive map along with highlights from the latest quarter. Head to **Visitors** for insights on foot traffic and visitor demographics, **Local Infrastructure** to explore what the area has to offer, or visit the **Neighbourhood Profile** for a deeper look at the area's population.



July 2026 Highlights

Total Number of Visits	Busiest Day of Week	Busiest Time of Day
6,251,979	Friday	12pm - 6pm

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Old Town Toronto

Visitor Levels | Visitor Demographics

This chart shows the number of visitors to Old Town Toronto since 2022. We can see a trend of pedestrian visits building up from the earlier months and then staying strong through the warmer seasons, when the area draws noticeably more foot traffic. The pattern also shows a steady rise from the earlier year to the later years, with recent months sitting above the levels seen at the start of the period.

Download CSV

Weekly Monthly Quarterly Yearly



Updated monthly. Last updated July 2026

Source: Environics Analytics

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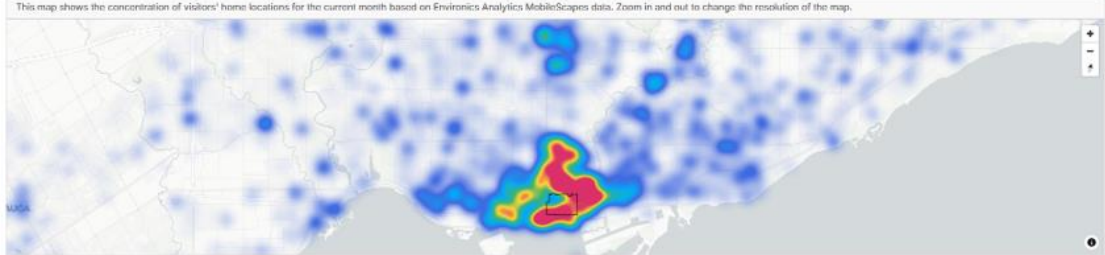
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Old Town Toronto

Visitor Levels | Visitor Demographics

Visitor Heatmap

This map shows the concentration of visitors' home locations for the current month based on Environics Analytics MobileScapes data. Zoom in and out to change the resolution of the map.



Updated monthly. Last updated July 2026

Source: Environics Analytics

Old Town Toronto

Main Street Businesses | Civic Infrastructure | Employment | Housing | Transportation

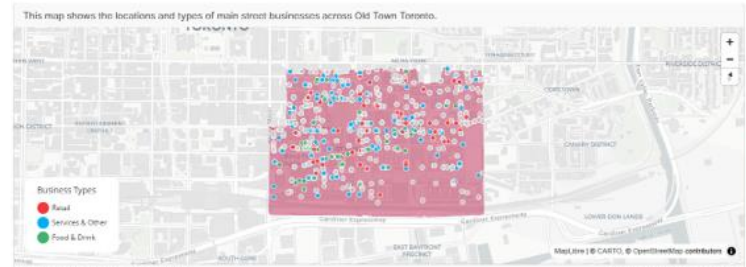
Main Street Business Highlights

Main Street Businesses	Civic Infrastructure	Other Establishments	Total Establishments
522	172	762	1,456

What is a Main Street Business?

Main Street Business Distribution

This map shows the locations and types of main street businesses across Old Town Toronto.



Independent Business Index	Number of Retail Locations
0.77	140

Number of Services & Other Locations	Number of Food & Drink Locations
258	124

Updated annually. Last updated July 2025

Source: Environics Analytics

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TABIA’s Dashboard Rollout

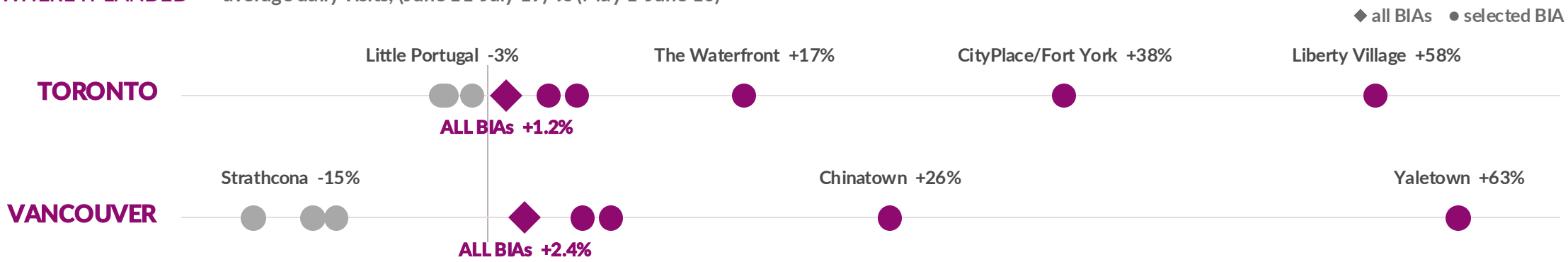
85 BIAs. 600,000 jobs. A coherent view into all.

More than 90,000 retailers, professionals, landowners and occupants sit inside those 85 areas. TABIA didn't start with one or two districts and wait for proof — every one of them got the dashboards which meant the platform went to work on day one, for all of them.

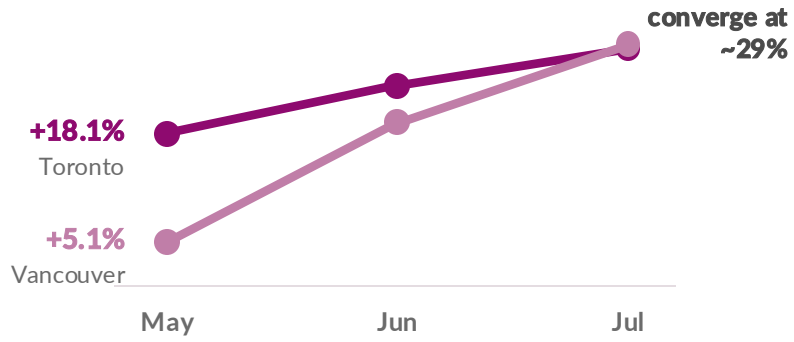
FIFA 2026: What the data says

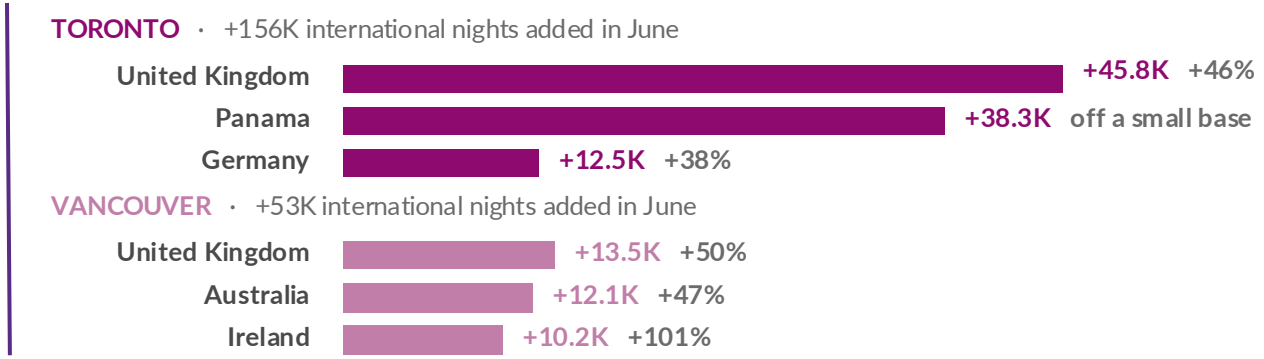
Two host cities, one pattern. District gains concentrated in a few places —
and Vancouver's international surge was genuinely new: ≈126K nights above trend, level with Toronto.

WHERE IT LANDED · average daily visits, (June 11-July 19) vs (May 1-June 10)



WHERE IT CAME FROM · international visitor nights — year-over-year trend (left) and the top three sources of growth, June 2026 (right)





EA CONNECT 2026

What's next: the Main Street 100 Index

A monthly read on 100 main streets

Chosen to look like Canada: every region and every size band, from single-block strips in small towns to the largest downtown BIAs in the country.

Visitation
Mobile-device visit counts
+0.1%
Environics Analytics MobileScapes

Transaction velocity
Aggregated card spending
+2.8%
Mastercard

Business health
Credit risk across 20.7k businesses
+7.3%
Dun & Bradstreet

Overall index +1.5% month over month · June 2026 release

The national average hides the spread — North +7.8%, BC +6.9%, Prairies +4.2%, Quebec −0.7%, East −1.5%, Ontario −1.7%.

Thank you.



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