



Meet Tyson Ma

Leaside Business Park Association

1. Tell us about your role as an EDO and some of your priorities in taking on that role.

Tyson's primary role is business retention and assisting businesses with any expansion needs. It is his goal to provide support to the business community to ensure business growth and long-term prosperity. The City of Toronto's Economic Development team provides the business community with personalized, direct access to City Hall, other governments and industry initiatives through a wide range of services. Tyson will also be the key contact when businesses encounter issues or problems regarding; planning and building applications, zoning issues, parking issues, hydro service improvements, and advising on applications to business incentive programs.

Top priorities include:

- Helping address operational needs, resolve municipal issues and navigate regulatory systems
- Acting as the link to City Hall
- Providing site location information to aid in investment decisions
- Assisting with business expansion, location and relocation within Toronto
- Encouraging the purchase or lease of real estate for employment uses
- Informing companies of business opportunities and facilitating innovative solutions through resource and knowledge sharing
- Advocating for businesses on City-wide policy issues

Two key Economic Development initiatives:

1) **Gold Star Service:** Through the City's Gold Star program for business City Planning, Economic Development and Toronto Building staff will help expedite eligible industrial, commercial office and institutional Planning and Building projects in Toronto.

2) **Advising on Business Incentive Programs:** The City of Toronto's Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation, Technology (IMIT) financial incentive program supports the renovation or construction of buildings in Toronto. Up to 60 per cent of the increased property tax revenue created by new development is shared between the City and the property owner over the course of 10 years. Tyson will also research other funding resources and incentives that may be applicable for the LBPA and the businesses in the park.

Tyson brings 10 years of public sector experience, having worked in several municipalities including York Region, Durham Region, the City of Markham, and the City of Brampton. For the past 8 years, he has worked with the Economic Development Office at the City of Brampton



Meet Tyson Ma

Leaside Business Park Association

as a Business Information and Policy Analyst. He has taken on several roles and new responsibility throughout the years. Tyson started off in the Research and Policy group and eventually transferred to the Investment Services team. On the Research team, he acted as a support role for the department in terms of site selections, building permit inquiries, development application inquiries, economic data, research requests, demographic data, and other Economic Development related RFIs (request for information). He eventually transferred to the Investment Services team where he worked with investors and the development industry on key ICI investment projects supporting activities and streamlining client services through the development process.

2. The Leaside Business Park is one of a few urban industrial parks within the City of Toronto; can you offer some perspectives on the importance of the business park for Toronto's economic development.

Industrial vacancy rates in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area is at a historic low; therefore preserving employment lands (ex. Heavy industrial uses) is a key factor in maintaining Toronto's economic health. Along with the downtown, centres and commercial avenues, Employment Areas help form the backbone urban economic structure; 25% of all jobs in the City are located in Employment Areas. With the impacts of the pandemic, on-shoring is a common interest for many Canadian companies (ex. Manufacturers). This is another reason why we should protect employment areas for future land uses and site requirements. The LBPA serves as a place for both local and international business investments. This business park provides a place for business formation and job growth. In order to maintain a health activity rate (job to population ratio), there must be areas that can accommodate job growth. Toronto job growth forecast 1.98 million jobs by 2051. LBPA also provides an opportunities for a diverse range of businesses from retail to heavy industrial. Specifically, LBPA provides an ideal location for manufacturing activities. Approximately 90% of all manufacturing jobs in Toronto are located in Employment Areas similar to Leaside. Leaside is well represented by the manufacturing sector (ex. Sil-tech, Lincoln Electric and TREMCO). The 350 establishments here employ 8,900 people in a wide range of activity. Leaside also provides places for Core Employment activities such as Asphalt and Cement mixing. This is ideal because Leaside is close to urban core construction activity. Concrete is a time sensitive product, as such the location of the concrete batching plants to the project site or market is key. The Downtown core and midtown traditionally utilize high strength mixes that have tighter tolerances and can be more difficult to work with if time limits aren't adhered to. A 30 minute travel time is optimal to ensure specialized concrete is delivered. The Leaside area is centrally located to supply concrete to the midtown Toronto development and infrastructure projects, including Crosslinx



Meet Tyson Ma

Leaside Business Park Association

Eglinton LRT. For more information on the Leaside – Thorncliffe Park Employment Profile, see Part 4 pages 20 – 22 from recent [Hemson Employment Study](#).

The LBPA also supports disadvantaged communities such as Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon area by providing stable jobs nearby for residents. Inclusion and equity is also a top priority for Toronto's Economic Development team. LBPA support jobs for equity seeking groups such as youths and newcomers.

3. As the Leaside Business Park and surrounding neighbourhoods continue to evolve, what economic development opportunities might be possible in that evolution, especially given the business park's proximity to the residential neighbourhoods of Leaside and Thorncliffe Park.

Leaside Business Park is located at the centre of Toronto and is in close proximity to other major business districts. LBPA will see increased labour mobility from the LRT and Ontario Line. This allows the businesses in the area to access talent from other parts of the City (ex. Downtown). Leaside is home to many amenities and robust infrastructure that allow residents to live, work and play within the area. In addition, there could be more interest from office related businesses (ex. Tech sector) or other office related developments. An example of this is the newly proposed Leaside Innovation Centre (<https://leasideinnovationcentre.com/>). There has also been an increased interest in developing mixed-use or new office buildings near LRT and other Major Transit Station Areas ([Major Transit Station Areas Interactive Engagement Tool \(arcgis.com\)](#)). Furthermore, with the impacts of the pandemic on the office market, many developers are looking beyond the downtown core for satellite office locations. This may be an opportunity for Leaside because companies may start looking at more local neighbourhood hubs to give employees flexibility (eg. Coworking spaces). Also, there could be more interest from e-commerce logistics providers as they look for prime sites closer to urban core and high density residential neighbourhoods. Lastly, there has been more of a focus on equity and inclusion from governments which will help areas like Flemingdon and Thorncliffe Park. Employers can work with governments to help tap into local talent from these communities. An example would be our recent Community Economic Development Grant which helped connect residents to jobs and skills training from businesses in the park.