

BUILDING BY DECADES



DAVID WILKES
PRESIDENT & CEO OF BILD

ON THE RIGHT PATH

The world's largest underground pedestrian network opens

Putting together this special feature for the Building Industry and Land Development Association's (BILD) 100th anniversary has given us an opportunity to trace the evolution of residential and commercial construction in the GTA over a 100-year period. In the 1970s, the foundations of the region continued to be laid on a significant scale.

The CN Tower, destined to become a well-known symbol of Canadian industry, technology and engineering, was completed in 1976. Coming in at 553.3 metres, it was the world's tallest free-standing structure for the next 32 years. It dominates Toronto's skyline, visible on a clear day from Oakville in the west, Markham in the north and Pickering in the east.

The regional system of government we are familiar with today was established in this decade with the creation of the regional municipalities of York, Peel, Halton and Durham. These regional municipal governments would evolve to provide core services—including police, fire, waste management, public transit and major infrastructure—to the smaller municipalities within their boundaries.

Several landmark shopping malls opened in the 1970s, changing the way the region shopped. The Eaton Centre, for example,

anchored between two TTC subway stops and connected to Toronto's growing PATH network, became a downtown magnet as soon as it opened in 1977. It remains North America's busiest shopping mall, by a significant margin, to this day.

Expanding transportation infrastructure knit the GTA together. GO Transit introduced the GO bus, two additional GO train lines and the now-familiar double decker rail cars. Highway 427 was designated in the early 1970s and Highway 400 expansion began at around the same time. Later in the decade, Highway 404, south of Steeles to the 401, was added, and construction began on Highway 403 through Mississauga. In Toronto, the Yonge subway line was extended to Finch and the Spadina subway line was added. This type of concentrated investment in public infrastructure has not been undertaken since.

By the end of the decade, the population of the region had grown to just over three million people, with more than one million living in the rapidly growing cities and towns surrounding the City of Toronto. It had taken nearly 150 years from the formal founding of Toronto in 1834 for the population to reach this level. It would take less than 40 years to more than double that to the current population levels, as you will see in the following sections.



An escalator connecting the ground floor level in the Financial District to PATH, beneath. Illustration by Suzana Esteves

Toronto is a city of secrets. If you hope to uncover them, it helps to keep your head down and know where to look. In Toronto, you can cross a ravine without noticing it, or sit across from Lake Ontario and not see the water.

The PATH system is another example. Oblivious to those on the streets above, below or beside, every working day, more than 200,000 people walk to the office or the subway, wander the halls and shop in the stores of the mostly subterranean pedestrian system that connects six subway stations, 1,200 businesses, 80-odd buildings and nine hotels along its 30-kilometre length.

The businesses that operate along it also generate \$1.7 billion in sales and pay more than \$270 million in taxes annually. Though COVID-19 has left PATH empty and deserted, few doubt that it will return healthier than ever, once we have wrestled the pandemic into submission.

Now ranked the largest such walkway in the world, Toronto's PATH network is a parallel underground metropolis that mimics the one above. But when it's snowing, blowing, pouring or boiling hot, PATH remains cool, calm and comfortable. It's not unusual to see people in short

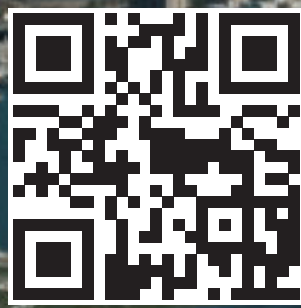
(Continued on pg. 2)

THE BILD CORNERSTONE

St. Lawrence Neighbourhood, TO's most successful planned community
1970s

Creation of Regions of York, Durham, Peel and Halton
1970s

SCAN TO SEE OUR DECADE-BY-DECADE TIMELINE



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 1465, File 745, Item 15

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(Continued from pg.1)

sleeves ambling through PATH's protected spaces in the dead of winter. It is an entirely self-contained urban precinct.

Some might incorrectly agree with the late urbanist and Torontonian Jane Jacobs that the PATH system has damaged street life by diverting people and businesses underground. Pedestrians in a -15 °C snowstorm would probably disagree as they scramble to find the nearest PATH entrance.

A similar thing happened on the stretch of Yonge St. that runs past the Eaton Centre between Dundas and Queen. The mall reduced outdoor foot traffic. That was solved in the early 2000s when new entrances and exists were added along the

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[PATH] empowers walking, the most democratic form of mobility.

east façade of the centre to make getting in and out easier. That sort of solution wouldn't work with PATH. More important, though, the city above the underground network is occupied largely by office towers, most of them surrounded by plazas and set back from the street. Even the much-admired Toronto-Dominion Centre, which gave credibility to the idea of PATH, has no shops, restaurants or the like at street level.

On the other hand, the TD Centre's basement, where PATH started, is Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's only underground retail complex.

For walkers, PATH provides an alternate one without bad weather and traffic jams. Not to say that these subterranean spaces don't get busy. On regular (pre-pandemic)

workday mornings and evenings, the pedestrian rush to and from Union Station gets fierce. Still, this pedestrian-oriented landscape is not only unique in Toronto, it anticipates the city's attempts to make itself more welcoming to those on foot, bicycle and scooter. If nothing else, it is a reminder that, indoors or out, we are all pedestrians.

But PATH increases the possibilities of pedestrianism exponentially. It empowers walking, the most democratic form of mobility. It's common to see those impromptu encounters that follow when two or more people bump into one another unexpectedly. Indeed, we can't help but wonder whether the sections of PATH beneath the Financial District haven't become an informal extension of the offices above. Unlike conventional shopping malls, PATH is a linear marketplace, a series of indoor streets lined with banks, businesses, cafes and food courts. It is a place to walk to and a place to walk through, a way in and a way out, a shortcut to the subway or a place to meander. Like the city overhead, it serves many purposes.

Though Eaton's built a tunnel to connect its downtown stores in 1900, PATH didn't get going in earnest until the 1970s when the TD Centre's underground concourse was expanded to the Sheraton Centre and the Richmond-Adelaide Centre. Today, the system runs south all the way to RBC WaterPark Place on Queen's Quay West, and north to the Atrium on Bay and the Toronto Bus Terminal.

PATH is so complex now, it's easy to get turned around. Yet as a response to pedestrians, it is an unqualified success. Yes, it's underground, but it long ago reached a critical mass of activity and accessibility needed to compensate for the absence of fresh air and sunshine. A century ago, leading architectural thinkers envisioned future cities where people lived above and traffic stayed below. PATH has turned all that upside down.

We like it down here.

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BEYOND THE CITY: UPPER TIER REGIONS IN THE 1970s

Before the regions of the GTA became regions, they were counties made up of villages, townships and agricultural land. In the late 1960s, population growth — thanks to the baby boom after the Second World War — led to increased density in the Greater Toronto Area. That meant more infrastructure was required, such as roads, public transit and sewage facilities. In response, the Government of Ontario decided to create an “upper-tier” government. So in the 1970s, four major tracts of land were combined into distinct regions to better service the GTA's rapid urbanization: York, Peel, Halton and Durham. Each is responsible for programs and services within its region — including health programs, long-term care, childcare support, garbage collection, water and wastewater treatment, road maintenance and housing — as well as its strategic plans for overall economic growth and development.

The Regional Municipality of York took effect in 1971, replacing historic York County, which back in 1792 — at its largest — encompassed the City of Toronto. The new region, chaired by Garfield Wright (former warden of York County), resulted in the consolidation of York County's 14 municipalities into nine new municipalities: the towns of Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Newmarket and Whitchurch-Stouffville, the township of King and the cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. Aurora, Newmarket and Richmond Hill are considered growth centres, with new developments focused along the Yonge Street corridor. York Region's population is expected to grow from 1,109,909 in 2016 to surpass 1.5 million residents by 2031.

What is now the Region of Peel became a county in 1851. In 1974, it became the Regional Municipality of Peel, chaired by former Mississauga city councillor Lou Parsons, providing services to Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. Growth in this region can be largely attributed to immigration and easy access to seven major highways. Peel is now the second-largest municipality in Ontario, home to 1.5 million residents — about half being recent immigrants. Its population is expected to increase from 1,429,000 in 2016 to 1,870,000 by 2036.

Also in 1974, Halton County became the Regional Municipality of Halton, comprised of Burlington, Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills. To manage its growing population, Burlington is intensifying key urban areas and building around transit, while Oakville still has room for greenfield development. Until 2000, the regional chair had been appointed by the Ontario government. Following the 2000 municipal election, politician Joyce Savoline was elected to the position. The region is projected to grow from 556,210 residents in 2016 to 752,537 by 2031.

The Regional Municipality of Durham, created in 1974, now encompasses the cities of Oshawa and Pickering, the towns of Ajax and Whitby, the municipality of Clarington and the townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge. First chaired by Walter Beath, Durham Region is the largest geographical jurisdiction in the GTA. Durham's population is currently 699,460 (December, 2019) and forecasted to be approximately one million by 2041.

THE BILD CORNERSTONE	Cortel Group (Cortelli Construction) 1971	Ontario Place opens 1971	Paradise Developments (Paradise Homes) 1972	Easton's Group (Easton's Group of Hotels and The Gupta Group) 1972
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TOWERING IMPACT

1970s Toronto sees the CN Tower go up...and up

When the CN Tower opened on 26 June 1976, it was not just a high point in the history of Toronto. At 553.3 metres (1,815 feet, five inches), it was the highest. Officially, its purpose was communications. But everyone understood that it also served to showcase Canadian engineering and construction prowess. And the CN Tower wasn't just bigger than other towers or buildings – it was the biggest. Indeed, until 2007 when the Burj Khalifa in Dubai surpassed it, it was the tallest freestanding structure in the world.

To understand the full meaning of this, it's necessary to think back to the burgeoning optimism of 1970s, the decade when Toronto began to enjoy its modernity and flex its municipal muscles in earnest. Though the tower was a private-sector initiative, Torontonians embraced it; they immediately grasped that this was a project that would redefine the city. Aside from a few office towers and the odd smokestack, Toronto was not, at that time, given to flights of height. But the tower was different; if nothing else, the speed with which it appeared made its construction process a daily spectacle.

Once the foundation was dug (in just four months), the structure grew about six metres (20 feet) a day. Concrete was poured Monday to Friday into a movable slipform as the material below hardened. When complete, crews had mixed and poured 40,500 cubic metres (53,000 cubic yards) of concrete. Little wonder its very construction became a public event; the whole city watched and witnessed as it rose inexorably higher than anyone thought possible.

Then came “Olga,” the giant Sikorsky helicopter that hovered like some enormous mechanical dragonfly looking for something to devour. Once she began lifting the antenna to the top of the tower, the city stopped as one to watch. It was a moment that none of us would forget. The 102-metre (336-foot) antenna consisted of 32 pieces, each of which had to be put in place separately. The job took three-and-a-half weeks, considerably less than the six months required if a crane had been used, as originally planned. During that period, Olga became the object of much attention. So did the ironworkers photographed sitting calmly on I-beams up in the clouds while pushing and pulling the antenna into place.

It was the moment the full reality of the CN Tower became clear to Torontonians. Though it would take more than a year of work before the facility opened to the public, it was already an inescapable feature on the urban landscape. Not only did the tower confirm Toronto's emergence as a vertical city, it exerted the sort of pull that makes it the centre of the region despite its actual location at the bottom end of the GTA.

Happily for us, the tower is among the most elegant ever built. Designed by Australian architect John Andrews with Toronto's WZMH, it underwent the usual design evolution before achieving its final form. But compared to, say, the resolutely ordinary Burj Khalifa, Toronto's tower is decidedly poetic. It compares favourably to the celebrated La dame de fer that Gustave Eiffel erected for the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889.

The CN Tower also turned out to be a catalyst for a major round of development that continues even today. When first conceived, the tower was part of a much larger



The CN Tower being constructed in downtown Toronto, 1976. Toronto Star, Boris Spremo / Contributor

mixed-use scheme that would have transformed the Railway Lands. Included were a convention centre as well as residential, commercial and cultural buildings. But two years into construction, the project was cancelled and the tower found itself in the middle of what had been a railway yard, not exactly inaccessible but definitely isolated and hard to reach.

In time, however, SkyDome (now Rogers Centre) would appear, along with

the CBC Broadcast Centre, the southern extension of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Ripley's Aquarium and, a little farther east, the dynamic South Core neighbourhood. In other words, the CN Tower anticipated future growth long before it occurred.

More important, though, the tower instantly became a symbol of Toronto, and the image by which it is recognized globally. It's Toronto's Eiffel Tower, its Golden Gate

Bridge, and except for New City Hall, its most celebrated structure. Naturally, Torontonians' relationship with the tower has changed over the years; it's no longer new but neither is it taken for granted. Today it has become a part of the physical and cultural geography on which the city is built – elemental yet ever-changing.

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THE BILD
CORNERSTONE

Alterra Developments Ltd.
(Alterra Group of Companies)
1973

The Vogue Development
Group Inc.
1974

Cadillac
Fairview
1974

IBI
Group
1974

Primont
Homes
1974

Mississauga
incorporated as a city
1974

First Canadian
Place opens
1974

Great Gulf
Group
1975

First Ontario Building
Code comes into effect
1974

Camrost
Felcorp Inc.
1975

COME ONE AND ALL

Canada opens its doors to the world, fuelling a city's expansion

Toronto is a city (and nation) of immigrants, which defines and enriches our culture, our economy and our neighbourhoods.

The 1970s were defined not only by the post-war baby boom generation, but also the influx of newcomers to our city, which led to a period of unprecedented growth.

More people meant increased demand for housing, education and transportation, as well as consumer goods and services. A whole new infrastructure would be required to accommodate the fast-expanding population, everything from hospitals and schools to roads and sewers. Suddenly, the Greater Toronto Area was a vast construction site, as public and private sectors struggled to keep up with demand.

Our country had long opened its doors to those looking for a better life, which in turn has defined our city. And that openness was increased in the mid-70s with a pivotal piece of legislation.

The *Immigration Act* of 1976 (which came into effect in 1978) represented a significant shift in Canadian immigration policy, recognizing refugees and prioritizing humanitarian concerns and family reunification.



A shop on Augusta Ave. in Toronto's Kensington Market in the 1970s. Toronto Star, Frank Lennon / Contributor

It is no exaggeration to say that the new legislation marked the start of Canada's willingness to engage with the wider world. It was a watershed moment for a country now recognized globally as a safe haven. The most recent example came in the mid-2010s when Canada took in more

than 40,000 Syrians fleeing a devastating civil war.

Immigration rules introduced in the '70s left the GTA a more cosmopolitan and confident region. Newcomers influenced urban and suburban culture right down to the very food we eat. Immigrants took local cuisine

far beyond what it was back in the white-bread days when Torontonians turned up their noses at garlic and had never heard of okra or cilantro. Today, all are on the menu.

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THE BILD CORNERSTONE	Canderel	Losani Homes	CN Tower opens	Royal Pine Homes (Eglinton Carpentry)	Geranium	Eaton Centre opens
	1975	1976	1976	1976	1977	1977

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From humble beginnings, Minto Communities has grown into one of the GTA's most trusted developers, known for innovation, commitment to quality homes, and sustainability.

The Minto Communities story is directly interwoven with the 100-year anniversary of BILD. It begins in the 1920s, when the Greenberg family immigrated to Canada. Driven by their entrepreneurial spirit, adaptability, and constant innovation, the Greenberg family believed they could make better places for everyone to live.

In 1955, brothers Gilbert, Irving, Lawrence and Louis launched their construction company Mercury Homes, which was later registered as Minto Construction Ltd. Over the years, the Greenberg brothers helped modernize the concept of new home construction in Canada and grew the business substantially, expanding into the development space as Minto Communities. Today, Minto Communities is active across the GTA, Ottawa, and Alberta, as well as in Florida and South Carolina. Altogether, Minto Communities has built over 85,000 homes using thoughtful design and planning to create complete communities where residents can flourish.

There have been many milestones throughout Minto Communities' history. In the 1960s, Minto Communities was one of the first builders in Ontario to pre-fabricate framing for their homes, enabling faster production with better quality. That same decade, in 1968, Minto Communities built the first-ever high-rise condominium in Canada, named Horizon House in Parkwood Hills, Ottawa. Their first project in Toronto, "Optima on the Park", a luxury condominium in Scarborough, broke ground in 1985. Next came the Minto Plaza twin tower complex at Bay and Elm Streets in 1988, followed by the ambitious Prince Arthur condo in Yorkville, a landmark known as an architectural icon.

Now, 30 years later, Minto Communities continues to contribute to the fabric of Toronto and the GTA through diverse projects like the mid-rise boutique condominium 123 Portland, which will enhance the vibrant King West pocket and The Saint, a 47-storey sleek tower at Church and Adelaide. Union Village, a master-planned low-rise community in Markham, created in partnership with Metropia, will provide 2,400 new homes in a variety of sizes and styles, transforming 412 acres into a complete and connected neighbourhood with incredible access to nature, parks, walking trails and opportunities for social connections. Remarkably, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, 123 Portland, Union Village and The Saint all broke ground in 2020.

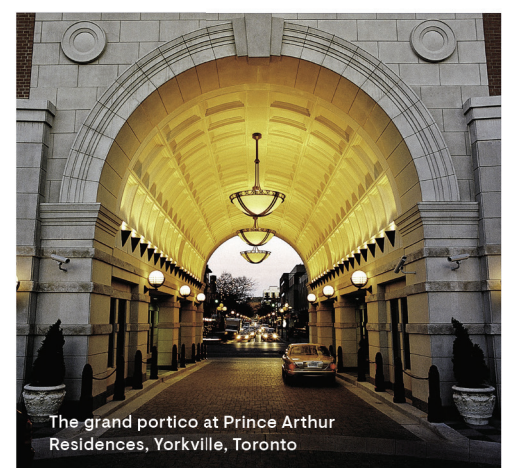
Sustainability has continued to grow in scope and focus since the Greenbergs' early adoption of recycling, with Minto Communities prioritizing green building practices, energy consumption, and resource management. In the late 1990s, Minto Communities created an Environmental Team to innovate new ways to minimize the impact of development and building operations. Since then, pursuing LEED® certification or ENERGY STAR® for high-rise and low-rise projects has become standard practice for the organization. Notably, Radiance at Minto Gardens was the first high-rise residential condominium to achieve LEED® certification, and organizationally, Minto Communities has won multiple awards from homebuilder associations in regional, provincial and national chapters to recognize sustainability efforts and energy consumption management, including winning the Green Builder of The Year eight times at various award ceremonies including the BILD awards, Ontario Home Builders' Association awards, and the Durham Region Homebuilders' Association awards.

Minto Communities is also enhancing the concept of wellness through every community, exploring new designations like WELL Certification, which measures the

overall wellness of a property, consistent incorporation of natural light and seamless connections to nature at every site, and holistic amenity programs that incorporate exciting new spaces like the meditation room with salt rock wall at downtown Toronto project The Saint. Continuing to manage energy consumption, Minto Communities is incorporating leading-edge technologies including its first geoexchange energy system at North Oak, the newest phase of the Oakvillage master-planned community.

Over our more than 65-year history, Minto Communities has always been driven by the concept of "building better" fueled by our core values of innovation and sustainability. Through all our evolution and expansion, we continue to learn and improve, thanks in part to incredible industry partners like BILD.

From all of us at Minto Communities, congratulations to BILD on your 100-year anniversary! Together, we can continue to build quality communities and revitalize neighbourhoods, creating better spaces for people of all ages to live, work and play.



The grand portico at Prince Arthur Residences, Yorkville, Toronto

This content was supplied by the advertiser.

A CITY ON THE MOVE

Mississauga steps into the limelight as a vital urban community

Mississauga is a city in a hurry. Though founded less than 50 years ago, it has quickly transformed itself from a bedroom community into a vital urban community. It still has work ahead, but it's well on the way to becoming a vibrant city where public transit is a viable alternative to the car. When completed in 2024, the new Light Rail Transit line running north up Hurontario St. from Port Credit to Brampton will give Mississauga rapid transit on its main drag. Already, development on Hurontario has taken off.

Back in 1974, when the City of Mississauga was incorporated, it was a scattering of villages and towns – notably Streetsville and Port Credit – and a smattering of self-contained subdivisions. The busiest place in town, Square One, opened the year before. Aerial photographs taken at the time show the shopping centre and its enormous parking lot surrounded by an expanse of fields. It was connected to the region by a network of highways that facilitate shoppers making the trip to Square One.

Square One itself has undergone numerous additions and improvements over the decades. It now has 360 stores in 2.2 million square feet of retail space. When it opened, its anchor tenants were Eaton's, The Bay, Woolco, Dominion and Simpsons-Sears. All but one are long gone. And that parking lot has also changed, transit improved and commercial development taken place, consequently requiring less room for parking spaces.

At the same time, residential development was getting started in earnest. One example, Mississauga Valley, was typical of suburban construction in the early '70s. Small but self-contained, the community offered a variety

of housing types ranging from "California-style" bungalows and townhouses to mid-rise apartment buildings. Parks, schools, libraries and a community centre were also part of the mix. Situated close to Square One, the new development was a huge success, selling out in a single weekend, illustrating the appeal of the suburbs.

Both the centre and the subdivision were the work of storied Mississauga developer Bruce McLaughlin. Remembered as the visionary presence behind what is now Canada's sixth-largest city, he was one of a trio of businessmen – along with E.P. Taylor (Erin Mills) and Peter Langer (Meadowvale) – that built Mississauga. McLaughlin recognized early on the potential of developing a city between Toronto and Pearson International Airport. He bought hundreds of acres of land when it was still being used for corn and cattle. His concept of a suburban city centered on Square One wouldn't be fully realized for several decades, but McLaughlin lived to see his vision come true before his death in 2012.

McLaughlin's decisive moment came in 1979 when the original Mississauga City Hall burned down. The next day he met with civic leaders to provide (free) land for a new City Hall near Square One. His proposal was accepted and the rest is history. When Hazel McCallion was first elected mayor in 1978, her campaign was based on the belief that city hall had to take control of growth by adopting an official plan and imposing development charges and lot levies. Her insistence that "growth must pay for itself" wasn't what builders wanted to hear at that time but has become the standard on which development has pro-



An aerial view of Mississauga in the 1970s. Toronto Star, Ron Bull / Contributor

ceeded. Mississauga's approach eventually led to industry agreements that would, and continue to, pay for social and civic infrastructure.

Like the city over which she presided for 36 years, McCallion would change and grow. By the late 1980s she had come to realize that mass transit was the key to Mississauga's future. But, she also understood, that would in turn require greater density than that offered by communities comprised of single-family homes.

Ironically, decisions taken in the '70s will enable Mississauga to fulfill its urban ambitions. The spread-out approach to suburban development has left plenty of room for the density McCallion wanted. It will be found in the extra-wide roads, parking lots and grassy verges that proliferate in the city. McCallion's successor, Bonnie Crombie, has been open about her

desire to lead Mississauga into its next incarnation.

The former Lakeview Power Plant on the Port Credit waterfront is another place where urbanization will occur. Though Mississauga is a commercial and transportation hub, like many cities it faces the question of what to do with former industrial land. The 75-acre site will be revitalized and turned into a dense, transit-oriented community. With a projected population of 20,000, Lakeview Village will be a rare "complete community" conceived from the ground up. Mixing mid-rise and high-rise, it will offer access to Lake Ontario as well as a pedestrian-friendly plan with green spaces and all the usual urban amenities. In other words, the best of all worlds.

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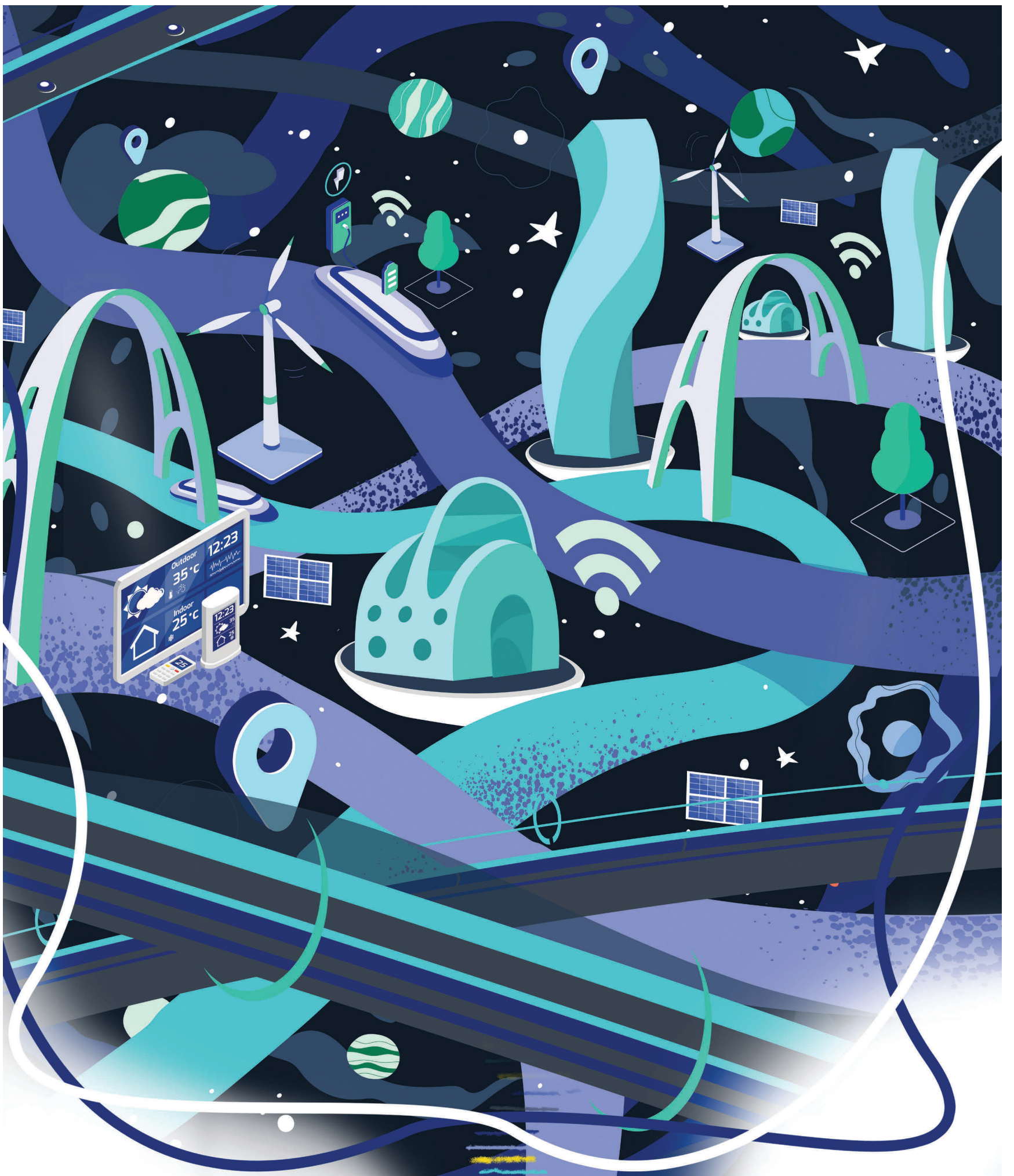
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