CASE STUDY REPORT

Raising the Skyline:

I8IS Corporation Workforce Delivery for CIBC SQUARE, Toronto

Multi-Discipline Construction Workforce Supply Across a Two-Tower High-Rise Programme (2017–2024)



Downtown Toronto's South Core — the skyline I8IS crews helped to raise

Prepared by I8IS Corporation — Workforce Solutions Division

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1. Executive Summary

How I8IS Corporation staffed one of the largest office developments in Canadian history — two towers, one elevated park, and a live rail corridor in between.

CIBC SQUARE is a three-million-square-foot, two-tower office complex in Toronto's Financial District, co-developed by Ivanhoé Cambridge and Hines and designed by WilkinsonEyre with Adamson Associates. Between June 2017 and December 2024, I8IS Corporation served as a principal multi-discipline workforce supply partner on both phases of the programme: the 49-storey south tower at 81 Bay Street (2017–2022, including tenant fit-out) and the 50-storey north tower at 141 Bay Street together with the one-acre elevated park spanning the rail corridor (2021–2024).

Across eight construction years, I8IS recruited, certified, mobilized and managed 2,350 unique workers across 16 disciplines — from concrete and formwork crews driving four-day floor cycles on the self-climbing cores, to curtain wall glaziers setting the towers' signature folded-glass diamond facades, to specialist steel erectors and landscapers building a public park over live GO Transit tracks. Programme volume reached 5.85 million worker-hours, delivered with zero fatalities and a recordable incident rate roughly one-eighth of the industry average.

After completing each tower, I8IS extended its role into tenant fit-out crew supply for anchor tenants including CIBC, Microsoft Canada and Boston Consulting Group, and transitioned 84 of its proven site personnel into permanent facilities, security and building-services roles—carrying hard-won building knowledge from the construction fence into day-to-day operations.

Key Figures at a Glance

Metric	Value	Scope
Unique workers deployed	2,350	Jun 2017 – Dec 2024
Phase 1 peak headcount (81 Bay)	502	Q2 2019
Phase 2 peak headcount (141 Bay + Park)	600	Q3 2023
Total worker-hours	5.85 million	Both phases
Fatalities / permanent disabilities	0	Entire programme
Recordable incident rate	0.38 per 200k hrs	vs ~3.1 industry average
GTA local hires	64%	Both phases
Apprenticeship placements	118	With union partners
Permanent facilities staff transitioned	84	2021 – 2024

2. Project Background — CIBC SQUARE

Two Class AAA towers, Canada's busiest transit hub at the doorstep, and a public park built in the sky.

CIBC SQUARE occupies two city blocks astride the Union Station rail corridor in downtown Toronto. The 49-storey south tower at 81 Bay Street (241 m) broke ground in June 2017, opened for occupancy in early 2021, and was fully leased within months to tenants including CIBC — which takes over 1.6 million square feet across the complex — Microsoft Canada, Boston Consulting Group, AGF Management and the Business Development Bank of Canada. Its podium houses the Union Station Bus Terminal, which opened in December 2020 with 14 bus bays serving regional GO Transit and intercity services. The 50-storey north tower at 141 Bay Street (238 m) followed, breaking ground in March 2021 and completing its main construction programme in 2024, with CIBC again as anchor tenant.



CIBC SQUARE under construction in Toronto's South Core, with the CN Tower beyond

The development's signature element is The Park — a one-acre, publicly accessible elevated landscape bridging the two towers at fourth-floor level directly over active railway tracks, the first of its kind in Canada. Pedestrian bridges link the complex to Union Station, Scotiabank Arena and the PATH network, extending Toronto's underground walkway system south of the rail corridor for the first time.

The project was engineered to the highest performance standards in the Canadian market: 81 Bay Street earned LEED Platinum Core & Shell certification, a WELL Health-Safety Rating, WiredScore Platinum and SmartScore Platinum recognition — fewer than 40 buildings worldwide hold the latter — and was named NAIOP Toronto's Development of the Year for 2021. Delivering this complexity above live transit infrastructure, in the tightest construction market in the country, defined the workforce challenge handed to I8IS.

3. About I8IS Corporation and Its Mandate

A Canadian workforce solutions firm built for high-rise, high-complexity programmes.

I8IS Corporation is a Canadian workforce solutions and staffing firm headquartered in Ontario, supplying certified trades, technical specialists and site professionals to major construction programmes. Its high-rise practice covers every discipline of a modern tower build—excavation and shoring support, concrete and formwork, reinforcing steel, structural steel, curtain wall, mechanical-electrical-plumbing, vertical transportation, finishing trades, and commissioning—along with the supervision, safety, and quality professionals who keep them coordinated.

On CIBC SQUARE, working under the construction management of EllisDon and alongside concrete contractor Structform International and the project's specialist subcontractors, I8IS delivered a full-cycle workforce mandate:

Recruitment & certification — sourcing, vetting and credential verification for all supplied trades, including Working at Heights certification and site-specific rail-corridor protection training;

Mobilisation & labour management — scheduling, payroll, HR administration and union liaison across two overlapping sites over eight years;

Specialist scopes — night-shift rail-corridor crews, elevated-park steel and landscaping specialists, and facade teams for the folded-glass curtain wall;

Transition services — tenant fit-out crew supply and the conversion of proven site personnel into permanent facilities roles.

Why I8IS Was Selected

Selection Criterion	I8IS Capability	Evidence on CIBC SQUARE
High-rise depth	Core-and-formwork specialist pools	4-day floor cycles sustained at height
Live-infrastructure experience	Rail-corridor certified crews	300+ overnight possessions, zero incursions
Union partnerships	GTA hiring-hall agreements	118 apprenticeship placements
Safety record	COR-certified HSE programme	0 fatalities / 5.85M worker-hours
Scale & continuity	2,350-worker programme bench	Two phases, eight years, one partner
Local content	GTA recruitment network	64% local hires

4. Phase 1 Workforce — 81 Bay Street (2017–2022)

A peak of 502 workers raising 49 storeys of concrete, steel and folded glass above Bay Street.



Climbing the core — self-climbing formwork and tower crane operations, 81 Bay Street

Phase 1 began with excavation and shoring support in mid-2017 and accelerated through 2018 as the raft slab and below-grade structure — including the two-level Union Station Bus Terminal box — were poured. I8IS's concrete and formwork crews worked the tower's self-climbing core system, sustaining cycle times that tightened from seven days per floor in the low-rise to four days in the high-rise, while glaziers followed the rising structure with the unitised folded-glass facade. In total, 1,240 unique I8IS workers served on Phase 1 across its five-year arc.

Workforce Composition by Trade — Peak Headcount (Q2 2019)

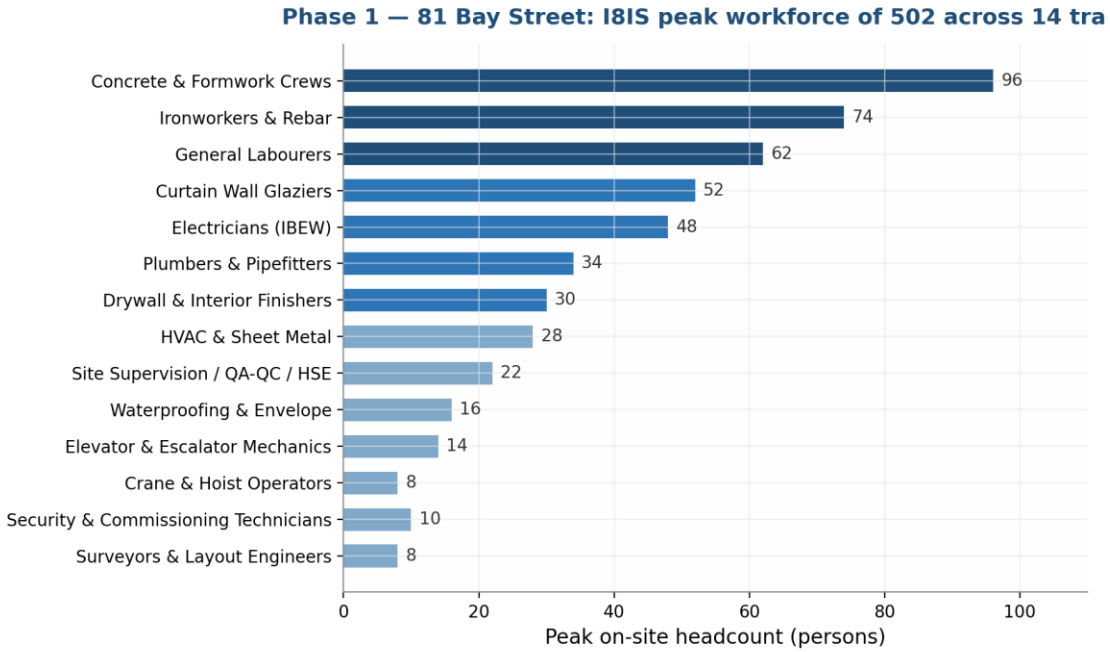


Figure 4.1 — I8IS peak Phase 1 headcount by trade

Concrete and formwork crews formed the largest contingent (96 at peak), reflecting a structure that climbed continuously for two years, supported by 74 ironworkers and rebar specialists. As the structure topped out, the mix pivoted: curtain wall glaziers (52) and the mechanical-electrical-plumbing trades (110 combined) grew through 2019–2020, followed by finishing trades fitting out the bus terminal, podium retail and office floors ahead of 2021 occupancy.

Phase 1 — Detailed Trade Breakdown

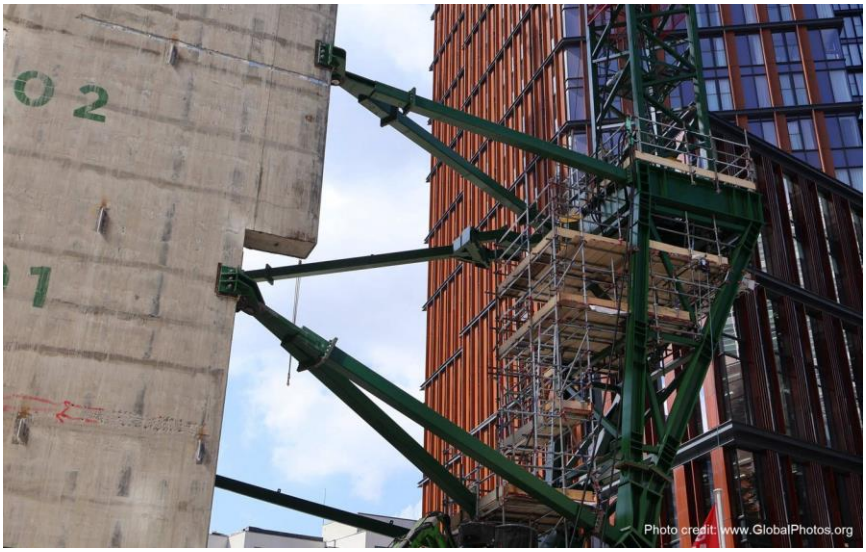
Trade / Discipline	Peak	Role on 81 Bay Street
Concrete & Formwork Crews	96	Core walls, columns and suspended slabs; 4-day high-rise cycles
Ironworkers & Rebar	74	Reinforcing steel for core, frame and raft slab
General Labourers	62	Material handling, housekeeping, hoist logistics
Curtain Wall Glaziers	52	Unitised folded-glass facade, diamond-pattern setting
Electricians (IBEW)	48	High-voltage distribution, lighting, life-safety systems
Plumbers & Pipefitters	34	Risers, drainage, bus terminal services
Drywall & Interior Finishers	30	Core back-of-house, lobbies, terminal interiors
HVAC & Sheet Metal	28	AHUs, risers, ventilation for tower and terminal
Site Supervision / QA-QC / HSE	22	I8IS site management, quality and safety officers
Waterproofing & Envelope	16	Below-grade waterproofing, podium envelope
Elevator & Escalator Mechanics	14	Tower lifts, terminal escalators, construction hoists
Security & Commissioning Technicians	10	Access systems, commissioning support
Crane & Hoist Operators	8	Two tower cranes, man-and-material hoists
Surveyors & Layout Engineers	8	Grid control, verticality, facade set-out
TOTAL (peak, Q2 2019)	502	1,240 unique workers across Phase 1 (2017–2022)

Table 4.1 — I8IS Phase 1 construction workforce by trade

5. Phase 2 Workforce — 141 Bay Street & The Park (2021–2024)

600 workers at peak — a 50-storey tower, two pedestrian bridges, and a park built over live tracks.

Phase 2 demanded everything Phase 1 had — at greater scale and with an added dimension no other Toronto site faced: building The Park, a one-acre landscape on a structural deck spanning one of North America's busiest rail corridors, where crews and equipment could work over the tracks only during overnight possessions. I8IS mobilised in early 2021 following demolition of the former GO bus terminal, ramping through shoring and excavation to a 600-worker peak in Q3 2023 as the tower's structure, facade and the park's steel deck rose simultaneously.



Structural steel and core interface works — the discipline that carried The Park over the rail corridor

Workforce Composition by Trade — Peak Headcount (Q3 2023)

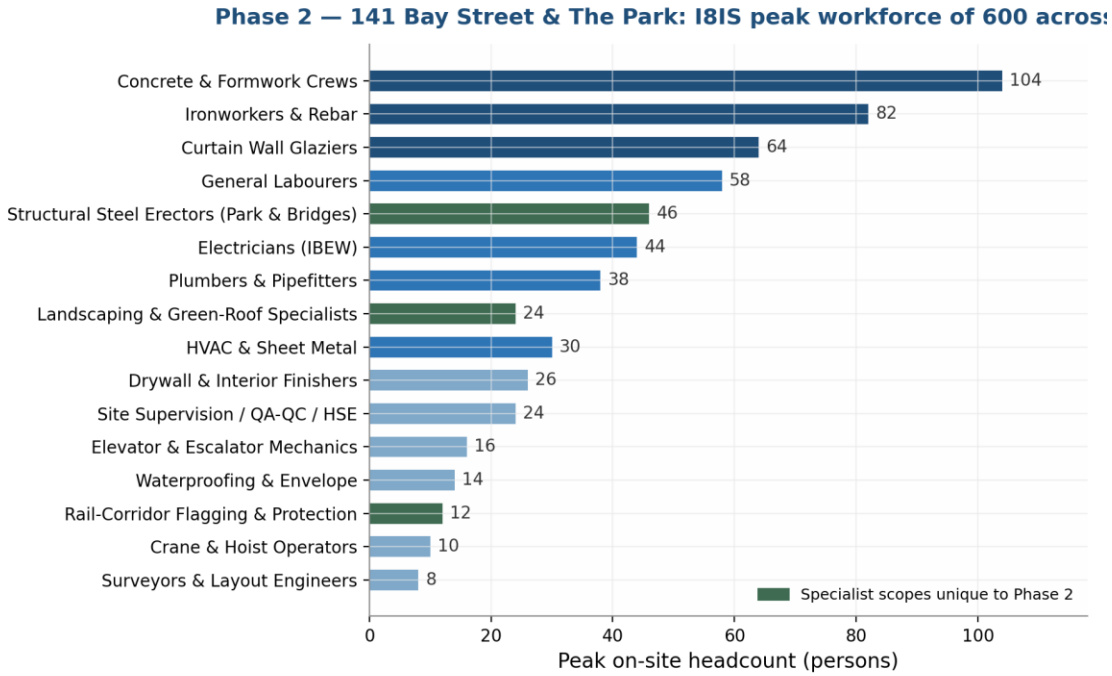


Figure 5.1 — I8IS peak Phase 2 headcount by trade (green = specialist scopes unique to Phase 2)

Three disciplines distinguished Phase 2: 46 structural steel erectors forming the park deck and pedestrian bridges; 24 landscaping and green-roof specialists installing tree cells, waterproofing and planting over the corridor; and a 12-person rail-corridor flagging and protection unit coordinating every overnight possession with Metrolinx. In total, 1,610 unique I8IS workers served on Phase 2 — roughly 500 of them veterans re-hired from Phase 1, a continuity dividend that cut induction time and carried site knowledge across the programme.

Phase 2 — Detailed Trade Breakdown

Trade / Discipline	Peak	Role on 141 Bay Street & The Park
Concrete & Formwork Crews	104	Tower core and frame; podium and park-deck support
Ironworkers & Rebar	82	Reinforcing steel, tower and park foundations
Curtain Wall Glaziers	64	Folded-glass facade across 50 storeys
General Labourers	58	Logistics, housekeeping, night-shift support
Structural Steel Erectors	46	Park deck steel, two pedestrian bridges
Electricians (IBEW)	44	Distribution, life-safety, PATH connection fit-out
Plumbers & Pipefitters	38	Tower risers, park irrigation and drainage
HVAC & Sheet Metal	30	High-efficiency plant, displacement ventilation
Drywall & Interior Finishers	26	Lobbies, amenity floors, core interiors
Site Supervision / QA-QC / HSE	24	I8IS site management incl. night-shift officers
Landscaping & Green-Roof Specialists	24	Tree cells, soils, planting, ice-rink slab
Elevator & Escalator Mechanics	16	Tower and PATH-link vertical transport
Waterproofing & Envelope	14	Park deck waterproofing, below-grade envelope
Rail-Corridor Flagging & Protection	12	Overnight possessions, Metrolinx coordination
Crane & Hoist Operators	10	Tower cranes and hoists across two frontages
Surveyors & Layout Engineers	8	Verticality, deck alignment, facade set-out
TOTAL (peak, Q3 2023)	600	1,610 unique workers across Phase 2 (2021–2024)

Table 5.1 — I8IS Phase 2 construction workforce by trade

6. Programme Mobilisation Timeline

Two overlapping bell curves — eight years of continuous, carefully phased workforce supply.

I8IS mobilised its first 44 workers in Q3 2017 for Phase 1 excavation. The Phase 1 curve climbed to its 502-worker peak in Q2 2019 as core, frame and facade ran concurrently, then tapered deliberately through the bus terminal handover (December 2020) and first office occupancy (Q1 2021). Phase 2 mobilised in Q1 2021 — deliberately overlapped so that Phase 1 completions crews could transfer directly — and built to a 600-worker peak in Q3 2023 before winding down through the park's completion and the tower's 2024 construction close-out.

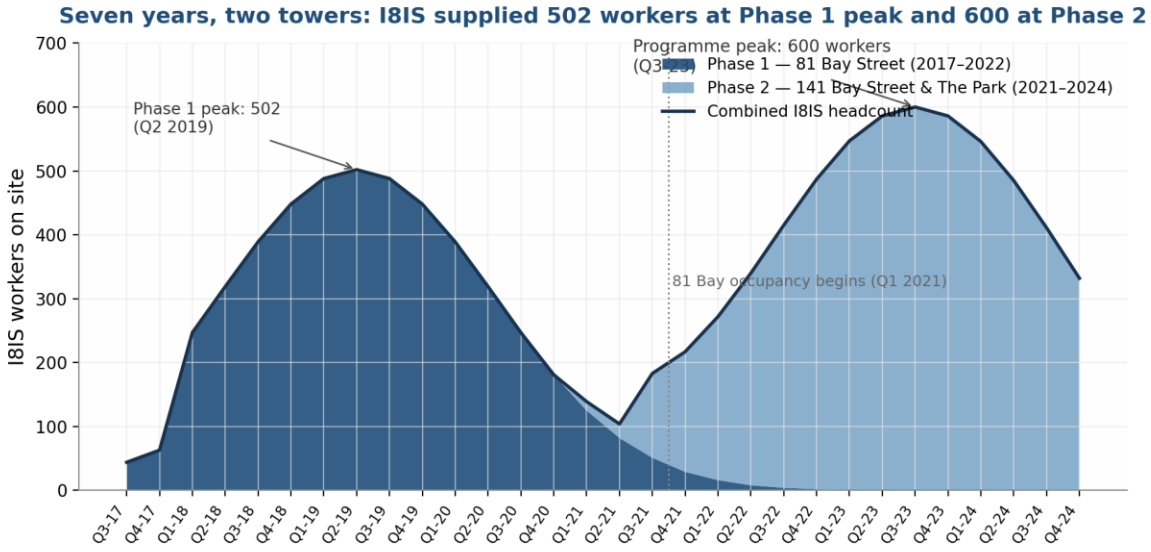


Figure 6.1 — Quarterly I8IS headcount by phase, Q3 2017 – Q4 2024

The hand-shaped overlap was the point: rather than demobilising a workforce and rebuilding it, I8IS treated CIBC SQUARE as one eight-year programme with two peaks. Approximately 500 workers served on both phases, and 84 continued into permanent facilities roles — a continuum no single-phase staffing strategy could have produced.

7. Specialty Scopes and Working Over a Live Rail Corridor

Night possessions, a park in the sky, a bus terminal inside a podium, and a facade with a diamond rhythm.

The Park — an acre of landscape over live tracks

The Park's 45 foundations, structural steel deck and underside metal deck were installed over an active GO Transit corridor. Because no personnel or equipment could be over the tracks while trains ran, this work proceeded in overnight possessions — more than 300 of them — executed by I8IS's rail-certified steel, decking and waterproofing crews under its dedicated flagging and protection unit. Once the deck was sealed, landscapers and green-roof specialists built up tree cells, engineered soils, planting and the seasonal ice-rink slab that make The Park a year-round public space.



Elevated landscapes of this kind demand specialist green-roof crews — a discipline I8IS built for The Park

7. Specialty Scopes (continued)

The folded-glass facades

Both towers wear a lightly folded unitised curtain wall forming a diamond pattern every ten storeys. I8IS's glazing crews — 52 strong at the Phase 1 peak and 64 at Phase 2 — set thousands of unitised panels from mast climbers and monorail systems, holding millimetre tolerances at heights above 230 metres through Toronto's full swing of weather.



Unitised curtain wall installation — the signature diamond facade takes shape panel by panel

Union Station Bus Terminal

The two-level, 14-bay terminal inside the 81 Bay podium opened in December 2020 — on time, in the middle of a pandemic year — with I8IS supplying its civil, structural, MEP and finishing crews through commissioning, including the terminal's intelligent bus-dispatch systems infrastructure.

8. Programme Volume — Worker-Hours by Year

5.85 million worker-hours: the human effort behind three million square feet.

Programme volume tracked the two-phase mobilisation curve: Phase 1 accounted for 2.75 million worker-hours across 2017–2022, cresting at 0.86 million in 2019 when the south tower's structure, facade and bus terminal ran at full concurrency. Phase 2 delivered 3.10 million worker-hours across 2021–2024, peaking at 1.08 million in 2024 as tower completion, park landscaping and close-out overlapped.

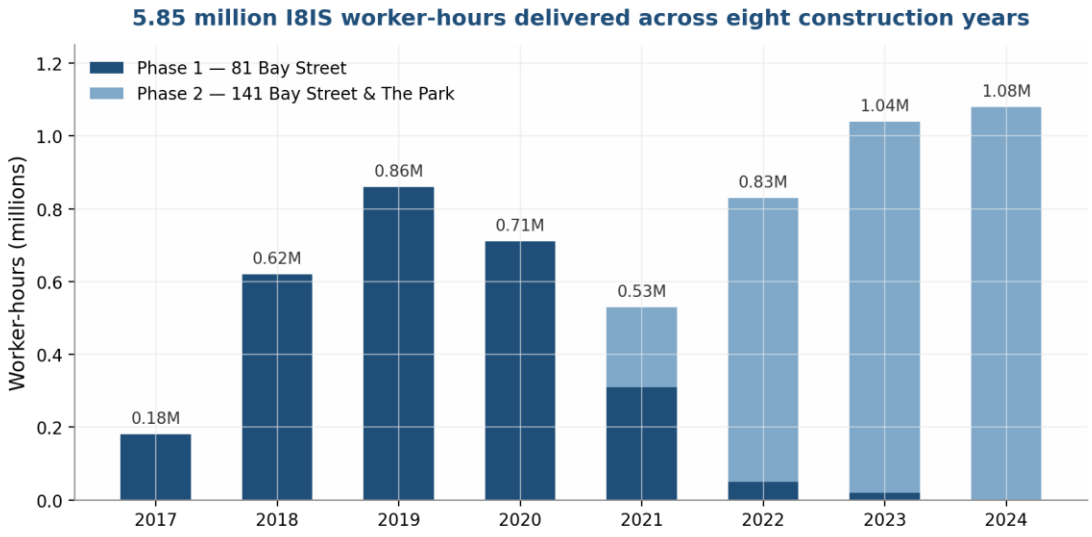


Figure 8.1 — I8IS worker-hours by year and phase (millions)

At its busiest, I8IS was administering payroll, scheduling, certification and safety records for more than 600 concurrent workers across two adjacent sites — an administrative operation that ran error-free through 2,350 unique worker files, 118 apprenticeship placements and continuous union-hall coordination.

9. Health, Safety and Training Performance

Zero fatalities over eight years, 50 storeys and 300 overnight rail possessions.

CIBC SQUARE stacked every high-risk environment in construction — work at extreme height, heavy cranage in a dense downtown, deep excavation, and works over a live rail corridor — onto two city blocks. I8IS met it with a COR-aligned safety management system: mandatory Working at Heights certification for every worker, rail-corridor protection training for all Phase 2 crews, daily pre-task planning, and a no-blame observation programme that generated thousands of leading-indicator reports.

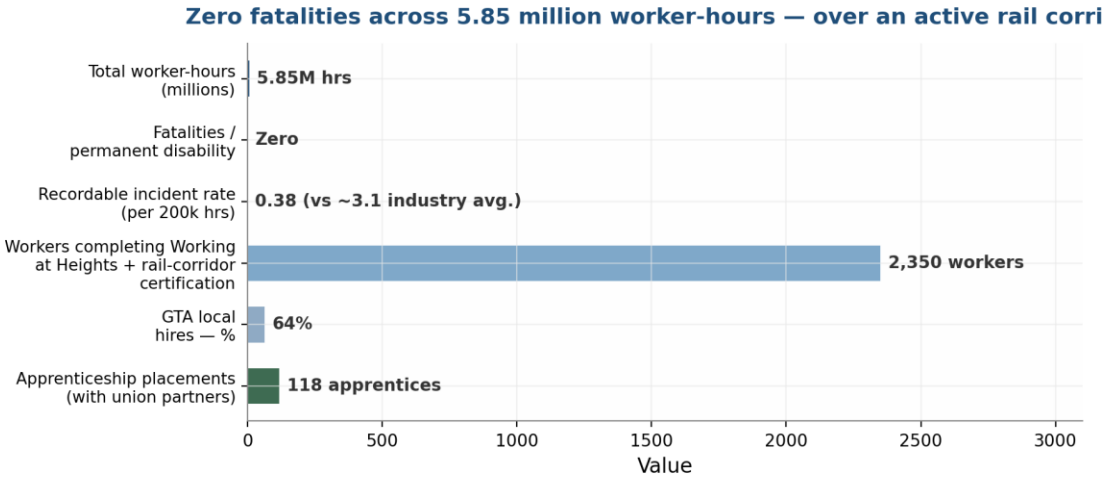


Figure 9.1 — I8IS safety and training performance across the programme

The result: 5.85 million worker-hours with zero fatalities or permanent-disability injuries and a recordable incident rate of 0.38 per 200,000 hours — approximately one-eighth of the construction industry average. Training investment was equally deliberate: all 2,350 deployed workers completed site-specific certification, and 118 apprenticeship placements with union partners turned the programme into a pipeline for the next generation of GTA tradespeople — many of whom stayed with I8IS for Phase 2.

10. Sustainability and Certification Support

Workforce discipline behind a triple-Platinum landmark.

CIBC SQUARE was engineered to the most demanding performance standards in the Canadian office market, and 81 Bay Street now holds LEED Platinum Core & Shell certification, the WELL Health-Safety Rating, WiredScore Platinum and SmartScore Platinum — a combination achieved by fewer than 40 buildings worldwide. 141 Bay Street was built to the same LEED Platinum and WELL standards. I8IS's contribution ran through every shift:

Construction waste & materials — crew-level waste segregation and careful material handling supported the project's diversion targets and low-emitting materials requirements under LEED Platinum;

Indoor air quality — IAQ management protocols through fit-out protected the WELL-aligned air-quality targets that tenants now experience daily;

Green infrastructure — I8IS landscapers built The Park itself: one acre of public green space, tree canopy and stormwater-retentive landscape over the corridor;

Transit-oriented delivery — the bus terminal, PATH connections and 500+ bicycle parking spaces I8IS crews helped build anchor the complex to mass transit — the foundation of its sustainability case.

Certification / Recognition	Tower	Status
LEED Platinum Core & Shell	81 Bay Street	Certified
WELL Health-Safety Rating	81 Bay Street	Achieved
WiredScore Platinum	81 Bay Street	Certified
SmartScore Platinum	81 Bay Street	Certified (top 40 worldwide)
ENERGY STAR	81 Bay Street	Certified
LEED Platinum + WELL standards	141 Bay Street	Engineered to standard
NAIOP REX Award — Development of the Year	81 Bay Street	2021

Certifications are earned in design documents but defended on site — in sealed waste skips, protected ductwork, careful concrete curing and honest record-keeping. That defence was staffed by I8IS.

11. Tenant Fit-Out and Facilities Transition

From base-build crews to boardroom finishes — and then into the building's permanent team.

As each tower approached completion, I8IS's role evolved with the building. Between 2021 and 2023, I8IS supplied tenant fit-out crews — approximately 220 workers at peak across carpentry, drywall, electrical, flooring, painting and move-logistics disciplines — for the interiors of anchor tenants including CIBC's Canadian headquarters, Microsoft Canada's national headquarters and Boston Consulting Group's Canadian offices. Familiarity with the towers' cores, risers and loading logistics made I8IS crews the natural choice for working inside a partially occupied, fully operational building.

The final transition followed the model I8IS pioneered on earlier engagements: converting proven site personnel into permanent roles. Eighty-four I8IS workers moved into facilities and building-services positions across the complex — building operators and critical-environment technicians, security and concierge staff, loading-dock and logistics coordinators, and horticultural attendants for The Park. Roughly one in three had been with the project since Phase 1.

Permanent Facilities Transition — Roles Filled

Function	Headcount	Responsibilities
Building Operators & Critical-Environment Technicians	34	Plant operation, monitoring, preventive maintenance
Security & Concierge	24	24/7 lobby and perimeter security, tenant services
Loading Dock & Logistics Coordinators	10	Freight scheduling, move management, dock operations
Horticulture & Park Attendants	9	The Park's planting, irrigation and seasonal activation
Cleaning & Day-Porter Services (green programme)	7	WELL-aligned day cleaning and waste management
TOTAL permanent roles	84	Converted from the I8IS construction workforce

Table 11.1 — I8IS personnel transitioned to permanent facilities roles, 2021–2024

For the ownership team, the value was continuity: the people now operating the cooling plant had helped pipe it, and the attendants caring for The Park's trees had planted them.

12. Outcomes and Lessons Learned

What eight years on Canada's most complex office site proved about workforce strategy.

Outcomes

CIBC SQUARE stands complete as one of the defining Canadian developments of its generation: two fully commercialised towers, a transit terminal woven into their base, and the country's first elevated park over a rail corridor. I8IS's contribution is written in the programme's numbers — 2,350 workers, 16 disciplines, 5.85 million worker-hours, zero fatalities — and in its recognition, from LEED Platinum to NAIOP's 2021 Development of the Year award for 81 Bay Street.

Lessons Learned

1. Treat a multi-phase programme as one workforce, not two projects. The 500 workers who crossed from Phase 1 to Phase 2 carried site knowledge, safety culture and productivity that no fresh mobilisation could replicate.

2. Specialist scopes need dedicated workforce units, not borrowed labour. The rail-corridor protection unit and park landscaping crew were stood up as permanent programme functions — and their records (300+ possessions, zero incursions) justified it.

3. Cycle-time performance is a staffing decision. Sustaining four-day floor cycles at height depended on stable, experienced core crews; protecting crew continuity protected the master schedule.

4. Apprenticeships are programme insurance. The 118 apprentices placed during Phase 1 became the certified journeypersons of Phase 2 — the single most effective hedge against a tightening GTA labour market.

13. Conclusion

CIBC SQUARE asked a question only a handful of workforce partners in Canada could answer: can you supply every discipline a 50-storey tower requires — at 600-worker peaks, over live transit infrastructure, across eight years — and still be there when the building opens its doors? I8IS Corporation's answer spans two towers and a park in the sky: 2,350 workers recruited and managed, 5.85 million worker-hours delivered without a fatality, tenant interiors fitted out for some of the world's most demanding occupiers, and 84 people who walked onto the site as construction workers and stayed on as the building's own team.

The towers' folded-glass diamonds now anchor Toronto's skyline, and The Park gives the city back an acre of green above its busiest tracks. Both are, in the end, the product of people — and of a workforce strategy that treated continuity, safety and skill as the true structure beneath the structure. CIBC SQUARE remains the benchmark for what I8IS Corporation delivers on complex, multi-phase high-rise programmes.

About This Case Study

This report was prepared by I8IS Corporation based on internal programme records from the 2017–2024 engagement and publicly available information on CIBC SQUARE, including developer announcements by Ivanhoé Cambridge and Hines, project updates published at cibcsquare.com, and industry coverage of the development's construction and certifications. Workforce figures reflect I8IS deployment records for the programme; project facts (heights, floor counts, tenants, certifications and timelines) are as published in the sources cited.