



CITY UPDATE

OCTOBER 2009

E-NEWSLETTER

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Toronto City Update focuses on the latest services, innovations and accomplishments at the City of Toronto – Canada's largest city and sixth largest government. This e-newsletter is for interested members of the public, stakeholders, members of City Council, and staff.

Enhancing customer service



toronto at your service

311 Toronto awaits your call

The City of Toronto has launched 311 Toronto – the largest, most exciting customer service improvement undertaken since amalgamation. With one call to 311, customer service representatives (CSRs) will be able to answer most questions or requests for information, take service requests and resolve the majority of enquiries without a call transfer to divisions.

311 improves accessibility to non-emergency City services and information, and will increase effectiveness in responding to public inquiries. Currently, CSRs at the 311 Contact Centre can complete service requests for water, waste and transportation services and can provide more than 15,000 answers to a possible 13,800 questions. 311 operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is available in more than 180 languages and TTY for the hearing impaired. In the coming months, additional service requests will be managed by 311 CSRs and service will expand on the web (toronto.ca/311).

www.toronto.ca/311

A global City – a global economy



Mercer's 2009 Quality of Living survey ranks Toronto high

Toronto continues to fare well in the Mercer Quality of Living Survey by ranking second in the top five cities in the Americas category. The City also ranks fourth in regards to its quality of infrastructure. Vienna, Zurich and Geneva rounded out the top three in the overall global comparisons, Vancouver tied for fourth place, and Toronto came in 15th place. The highest ranking American city is Honolulu at 29th.

Mercer's Quality of Living Survey ranks hundreds of cities on a number of criteria, including liveability and quality of life as well as supportive infrastructure such as electricity supply, water availability, telephone and mail services, public transport provision, traffic congestion, and the range of international flights from local airports.

www.mercer.com/qualityoflivingpr



Union Station revitalization on track

Plans for a \$640 million makeover of Union Station by 2015 have been approved by Toronto City Council. With funding from the City, the Province and the federal government, Toronto is poised to undertake the massive revitalization of this iconic Canadian landmark and make it one of the greatest in the world. The City has three key objectives in revitalizing Union Station: promote it as a multi-modal transportation hub; preserve its heritage and character; and develop it into a premier transportation centre that will be a major destination in the city. Union Station is the busiest passenger transportation facility in Canada, serving approximately a quarter of a million passengers each day.

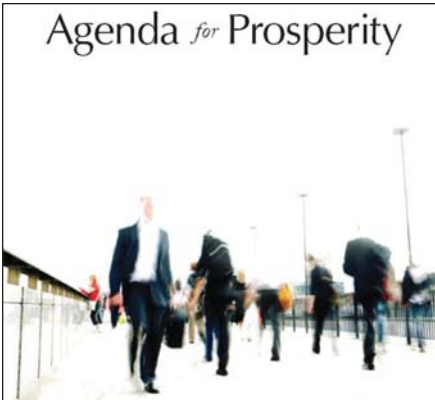
www.toronto.ca/union_station



City Manager featured speaker at CGAO conference

Toronto City Manager Joe Pennachetti was the keynote speaker at the recent Certified General Accountants of Ontario (CGAO) conference. In his video-taped address, Pennachetti discussed strategies that the City is adopting to achieve fiscal sustainability including controlling expenditures, funding assets and liabilities, and diversifying the City's revenue base. The City is also moving towards multi-year operating budgets that link outcomes, performance measures and continuous improvement. Pennachetti highlighted key City priorities such as Transit City, Build Toronto, Invest Toronto, the environment, waterfront, safer city/priority neighbourhoods, a ten-year housing plan and the 311 customer service initiative. Still on the City's "to do" list is to obtain 50 per cent operating funding from the Province for the TTC, a national transit strategy, and revenues that grow with the economy.

www.toronto.ca/city_manager/speeches-jp.htm



Service Sector Summit advances the Agenda for Prosperity

Toronto's Economic Development Committee has endorsed the organization of a summit this fall to boost Toronto's service sector and find ways to attract creative investment. Led by the City's Economic Development, Culture and Tourism division, the summit will bring together politicians, business and labour decision makers to discuss enhancing the role of the service sector in stimulating the economy. Discussions will focus on strategies to use the skills, creativity and innovative capacity of Toronto's labour force to create higher value-added services for customers and support higher wages for workers.

www.toronto.ca/business/index.htm



Toronto hosts senior legal officers of largest U.S. cities

Chief legal officers from the largest cities in the United States and Canada gathered in Toronto in June for the International Municipal Lawyers Association (IMLA) Top 50 meeting. Chief legal officers from New York City and Chicago, and from as far away as Texas, California and Oregon attended. It was the first time a Canadian city has hosted this event.

The group was formed four years ago and meets annually to discuss issues of common interest and concern that confront heads of large municipal legal departments. The group focused on issues including the recruitment and maintenance of a diversified workforce, how to manage costs when using outside legal counsel, and matters related to electronic discovery. The current economic condition and its impact on the administration of legal divisions were also discussed. The visitors were very impressed with Toronto's sights and attractions. Toronto's City Solicitor Anna Kinastowski is the Canadian regional vice-president of IMLA.

www.imla.org



Job Creation Partnership helps Toronto's unemployed

Through Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities funding, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism has provided 40 unemployed individuals with work placements within Business Improvement Areas, Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas and Festival/Event Organizations across Toronto. The Job Creation Partnership program is a unique 44-week placement that allows partners to expand operations and take on new projects while participants upgrade their skills, network with the business community, and extend their Employment Insurance benefits. Ultimately, the participants will use this experience to secure permanent employment.

www.toronto.ca/bia/jcp.htm

Award-winning performance



National recognition for green initiatives and international contributions

The City of Toronto won the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Sustainable Community award in the buildings category and the Outstanding International Volunteer Contribution award at the FCM annual conference in Whistler, B.C. These awards recognize the City's leadership in sustainable community development and international municipal cooperation in South America, Africa, Asia and South-East Asia.

The City uses Toronto Green Standards (TGS) performance measures in its greening development practices concerning air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, water quality, solid waste and the natural environment.

The City has also demonstrated its volunteer leadership by working with international municipal governments to help improve quality of life in countries such as El Salvador, Botswana, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

www.gmf.fcm.ca/fcm-ch2m-awards



Emergency Medical Services hosts annual awards ceremony

Toronto Emergency Medical Services' (EMS) annual awards ceremony honoured citizens, allied services, members of the media, and EMS staff. Toronto EMS is particularly proud of the citizens who were honoured for responding to a need in the community when someone became ill or injured. Individuals were given awards for exceptional deeds such as performing CPR, delivering first aid, and using public access defibrillators, just to name a few. EMS staff were honoured with awards for outstanding acts of valour, heroism and merit.

www.torontoems.ca

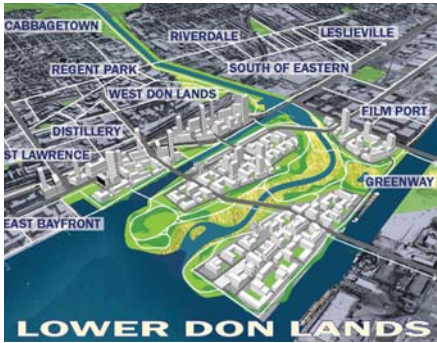


Doors Open Toronto has another reason to celebrate

City staff with Doors Open Toronto were recent recipients of the Canadian Urban Institute's 2009 Urban Leadership Award in the City Soul category. The awards honour Canadian individuals, groups and organizations that have made significant contributions to improving the quality of life in Canada's cities and urban regions. Karen Black, manager of Museum Services and Jane French, project manager were recognized for their role in bringing Doors Open to North America and inspiring cities across Canada and the U.S. to open their doors in celebration of their notable, unique buildings.

Record numbers of more than 250,000 people visited up to 175 buildings (commemorating Toronto's 175th anniversary), to celebrate 10 years of Doors Open Toronto. Participants lined up early for the last chance to tour inside the old Don Jail for free before its re-development this fall. But that was just the beginning of a weekend of touring venues of architectural, historic and cultural significance. The new Doors Open Toronto headquarters at City Hall welcomed 10,000 visitors and featured visits to the Mayor's Office, the Council Chamber and the Observation Deck. The weekend also marked the grand finale of Lit City – Toronto Stories, Toronto Settings with over 40 site-specific events celebrating writers who find inspiration in Toronto and use the city as a setting for their work. Plans are already in the works for next year's Doors Open Toronto taking place on May 29 and 30, 2010.

www.toronto.ca/doorsopen



Waterfront Toronto wins International Best Futuristic Design Award

Waterfront Toronto's Lower Don Lands plans have received the Best Futuristic Design Award in one of the world's leading sustainability-focused design competitions. The Keating Channel Precinct, the Lower Don Lands' first planned community, was recognized at the Building Exchange (BEX) Conference. Judged by a panel of leading experts, the awards celebrate sustainability, innovation, efficiency and collaboration in the built environment and demonstrate consideration of the issues surrounding climate change, sustainable communities and future legacies.

www.waterfronttoronto.ca



Spadina WaveDeck honoured for Design Excellence

The Spadina WaveDeck has won two important design awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects since its opening in September 2008. Designed by West 8 and du Toit Allsopp Hillier, the Spadina WaveDeck was also the first Canadian project ever to be shortlisted for the world-acclaimed Brit Insurance Design Awards. In the online audience voting component of the Brit Awards, the wavedeck ranked second as a public favourite in the architecture category.

www.waterfronttoronto.ca



Resource guide and parks and trails map awarded for accessibility

The City of Toronto received two awards in June from the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability as part of its All Abilities Challenge. The new municipal recreation resource guide Adapted Programs and Integrated Services for People with Disabilities provides a comprehensive listing of recreation programs and services that are accessible to people with disabilities. The guide is available online, at libraries, recreation centres and social service agencies, and is also available in Braille and large print copies.

The City was also recognized for its updated Exploring Toronto's Parks and Trails map. The map now includes useful information such as locations of accessible washrooms, TTC stations and trails. It was designed and printed to be as readable as possible for all abilities.

www.toronto.ca/parks



City wins at 2009 Canada Blooms Garden and Flower Show

Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff planted 1.3 million annuals this spring to beautify the City's streets, parks and community spaces. The plants and flowers, cultivated in City of Toronto greenhouses, play a vital role in contributing to a clean, beautiful, and liveable city.

The City of Toronto also earned three awards at the 2009 Canada Blooms Garden and Flower Show: Outstanding Interpretation of the Show Theme, the Garden Club of Toronto Award for Best Overall Use of Colour, and the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects' Certificate of Honourable Mention for Excellence in Design in Landscape Architecture.

www.toronto.ca/parks

Championing the environment



Mayor leads global summit on protecting the environment

Toronto Mayor David Miller chaired the Third C40 Large Cities Climate Summit held in Seoul in May. The Mayor was joined by President Bill Clinton, Seoul Mayor Oh Se-Hoon and Korean Prime Minister Han Seung Soo in stressing the important role of cities in the battle against climate change. Mayors David Miller and Oh See-Hoon signed a Memorandum of Understanding that commits Toronto and Seoul to share information, experience and best practices. The Summit included adoption of the Seoul Declaration that calls on major cities to convert into low-carbon areas by cutting greenhouse gas emissions to the largest extent possible.

Also at the Summit, Waterfront Toronto's Lower Don Lands project was named as one of 16 founding global projects of the Climate + Development Program, a partnership between the Clinton Climate Initiative and the U.S. Green Building Council. Plans for the Lower Don Lands include reducing greenhouse gas emissions to below zero by implementing economically viable innovations in the generation of clean energy, re-naturalizing the Don River mouth, re-routing it to address flood protection, and creating wetland and natural green spaces.

www.c40cities.org/summit/2009



Toronto hosts Canadian and American universities' EcoCAR Challenge

In June, the City of Toronto hosted the EcoCAR Challenge: The Next Challenge. Budding engineers from 17 Canadian and American universities converged at Toronto's Sheraton Centre Hotel to compete for the best-designed green vehicle. Mayor David Miller commended students for supporting the global effort to reduce the environmental impact of traditional automobiles, and thanked organizers for bringing the EcoCAR Challenge to a city that strives to be one of the greenest on the planet. University students from Ohio State University earned top honours for their design of an Extended Range Electric Vehicle (EREV).

www.ecocarchallenge.org



City cycling on a roll – new bike station

The City continues to make great progress in increasing cycling and transit in Toronto with the official opening of a new bike station at Union Station. A bicycle station is a secure, indoor parking facility in a convenient location that also provides customers with information on bicycling, walking and public transit in Toronto. The new bicycle station is expected to encourage and increase cycling because it provides protection from theft, vandalism and inclement weather.

www.toronto.ca/cycling/bicycle-station



New bike lanes add to City's network

Numerous other improvements to enhance cycling in Toronto include installation of more bike lanes, new off-road bike trails, increased signed bike routes and new pavement markings. The City is developing 100 kilometres of bikeways including 70 kilometres of bike lanes, 30 kilometres of signed bike routes and several bike boxes, an intersection safety design that allows cyclists to wait ahead of motorists at red lights to help prevent bicycle/car collisions. More bikes on the road will help reduce traffic congestion and biking is a great physical activity that leads to a healthy lifestyle and healthy communities.

www.toronto.ca/cycling



Toronto's tree canopy growing . . . and growing

The City is on track to plant over 100,000 trees this year in an effort to double Toronto's tree canopy by 2050.

The new trees are being planted by the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff, private businesses, individuals and volunteers through programs such as Trees Across Toronto (volunteers planted 5,000 trees in just one day). The City is also ensuring existing trees on both public and private land live long, healthy lives through improved tree maintenance, educational programs, promotion of diverse and native tree species, as well as encouraging other City divisions, organizations and businesses to prioritize tree preservation.

www.toronto.ca/parks/tat

On the waterfront



West Don Lands named as site for Athletes Village in Pan American Games bid

Waterfront Toronto's West Don Lands has been selected as the location for the temporary athletes village for Toronto's 2015 Pan American Games bid. The proposed athletes village, should the city win its bid to host the games, would accommodate up to 8,500 athletes and team officials and include facilities such as a temporary 50 metre pool and 400 metre track. Plans also include an accreditation centre to process athletes, team officials and visitors, as well as a medical centre, retail space, restaurants, entertainment areas, and other conveniences. Other cities vying for the games are Lima, Peru and Bogota, Columbia.

www.waterfronttoronto.ca



Blue Flags flying high

Key-Balmy Beach won the international Blue Flag designation in June, raising the number of Blue Flag beaches to seven in Toronto. The Blue Flag program is a highly respected eco-label for swimming beaches. Environmental Defence operates the program in Canada and ensures that 27 criteria are met to receive and maintain Blue Flag status, including water quality, environmental management and education, safety and services. Parks, Forestry and Recreation operates and maintains beach facilities and amenities.

Blue Flag beaches must be open for at least 80 per cent of the season to qualify. To monitor water quality, Toronto Water takes daily samples at all 11 swimming beaches from June through Labour Day. Ontario's standards are the highest in Canada and are among the most stringent in the world.

www.toronto.ca/beach



New WaveDecks open on Toronto's waterfront

Waterfront Toronto opened two new wavedecks along Toronto's central waterfront this summer. The Simcoe WaveDeck, located just west of Simcoe Street at the water's edge, features an informal public amphitheatre-style space with impressive curves that soar as high as 2.6 metres above the lake. Built in less than eight months, this dramatic new urban deck joins the Spadina WaveDeck which opened last year, to create more public space along Toronto's shoreline. The third wavedeck at the Rees Slip, opened ahead of schedule in mid-July. The Rees WaveDeck is designed to give the small craft boating clubs and programs in the slip an amphitheatre-like space for outdoor education and a unique way to enjoy the lake.

Waterfront Toronto's award-winning design for the central waterfront also includes a continuous water's edge promenade and boardwalk, a series of pedestrian footbridges connecting major attractions on the waterfront, and the transformation of Queens Quay into a pedestrian-friendly, grand boulevard.

www.waterfronttoronto.ca



Martin Goodman Trail at Ontario Place now open

The revitalized stretch of the Martin Goodman Trail at Ontario Place is now open for public use. The revamped 1.3 kilometre section of trail is a critical component of the approximately 56 kilometre Martin Goodman Trail that runs along Toronto's waterfront and offers an important opportunity for alternative modes of travel across the waterfront.

Designed by leading landscape architects Janet Rosenberg & Associates, the new and improved stretch of multi-use trail runs parallel to Lake Shore Boulevard through Ontario Place from Marilyn Bell Park to Coronation Park at Strachan Avenue.

It's happening here



Scotiabank Nuit Blanche dazzles

From sunset October 3rd to sunrise October 4th, Toronto's fourth annual Scotiabank Nuit Blanche engaged audiences in a massive participatory celebration of contemporary art. Building on the success of past event's interactive art projects, this year's 'free all-night contemporary art thing' took the concept of audience participation to a whole new level, as the public literally became the art they ventured out all night to see. New interactive tools including the Night Navigator iPhone/Blackberry app and the My Night itinerary planner encouraged the audience to share pictures, tweet, text and talk to each other as they explored Scotiabank Nuit Blanche into the wee hours of the night. Plans are already under way for the fifth edition of Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, which returns to Toronto on Saturday, October 2, 2010.

www.toronto.ca/special_events/nuitblanche



Five thousand dollars awarded to Toronto Song Contest winners

George Axon and Aidan Mason were named the winners of the Toronto Song Contest on August 21, at the finale performance at the CNE. Their song “Love to Live in Toronto” garnered more than 6,600 of the 20,771 votes cast online and was clearly a crowd favourite at the finale performance. The song is accessible online at www.toronto.ca/vote4songs



Sounds of the fife and drum at Fort York

Fort York quickened its march towards the War of 1812 Bicentennial with Great Voices – an outdoor theatre event this summer at the Fort featuring Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, Laura Secord and other historical figures. Written by Rick Salutin and Dale Hamilton with original music by James Gordon, the play featured Billy Merasty as Tecumseh. Great Voices is an epic Brechtian-style theatre experience produced and directed by Sid Bruyn. The event also included food, campfires and fireworks for residents and visitors to enjoy.

<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/museums/fort-york.htm>



Spadina Museum: Historic House & Gardens

Spadina, the beautiful home of the Austin family, was built in 1866. It underwent several expansions and additions throughout the years and finally changed from city mansion to historic house museum in 1984. Containing the family's decorative arts and furnishings, and surrounded by elaborate gardens, Spadina Museum is a window to the past.

The museum will close in December to undergo a restoration and open again for the public in the summer of 2010. The project will highlight the inter-war years with a primary focus on the 1920s. This exciting period in Toronto's history will be explored in the Austin family home through new programs and events.

www.toronto.ca/culture/museums/spadina.htm