

April 21, 2009

**GROW IT:
City Hall's Podium Roof to transform into
Toronto's largest, publicly accessible green roof**

In 2009, the City of Toronto will build and open a new publicly accessible rooftop at City Hall for residents and visitors to enjoy. The greening of the City Hall podium roof will result in Toronto's largest, publicly accessible green roof - a new urban oasis in the heart of the city that will include landscaped gardens, a courtyard framing the Council Chamber, a podium terrace, and new walkways.

Green Podium Roof at City Hall

1. How the green roof will grow

As well as performing regular, state-of-good repair on the City Hall roof membrane, as part of the Nathan Philips Square Revitalization Project the City is installing an extensive green roof with 3,348 square metres (36,000 square feet) of vegetation.

The podium roof will be planted with a pre-vegetated, modular green roof system. Modular systems are essentially trays of vegetation in a growing medium that are grown off-site and seamlessly installed on rooftops. A diversity of plant species, grown regionally, has been selected for the City Hall Podium Roof for their seasonal colour and ability to withstand difficult rooftop conditions.

2. A Kaleidoscope of colour - all year around!

From above, Torontonians and visitors will witness a kaleidoscope of colour on the City Hall green roof that draws inspiration in part from Paul Klee's painting *Polyphony*. Colours of the green roof will slowly transform around the Council Chamber with every season.

3. Benefits of a green roof on the Podium of City Hall

- Creates a new public garden for downtown Toronto
- Contributes to Toronto's green spaces
- Increases habitat for invertebrates and birds in the heart of the city
- As part of the site-wide stormwater management system, reduces stormwater runoff, which affects quality of local water resources that supply drinking water, are used for swimming, and serve as fish and wildlife habitat
- Improves thermal and sound insulation at City Hall
- Improves air quality and reduces the building's contribution to the urban heat island effect and associated cooling costs
- Increases the lifespan of City Hall's roof membrane by reducing thermal contraction and expansion

- Beautifies Toronto's premier center for local government and democracy
- Installation of the new green roof also achieves one of the major recommendations of Toronto's Green Roofs Strategy – *Making Green Roofs Happen* (February 2006) in which Council directed the City demonstrate leadership by installing green roofs on its own facilities.

About green roofs

1. What is a green roof?

A green roof is a system where a vegetated area becomes part of the building's roof system and includes vegetation, a growing medium, a filter layer, a drainage layer, a root resistance layer and a waterproof membrane.

Green roofs are built on top of a human-made structure and can be located below, at, or above grade. There are three main types of green roof systems:

- complete systems where all the different components including the roof membrane are an integral part of the whole system
- modular systems that are positioned above the existing roofing system
- pre-cultivated vegetation blankets that consist of growing medium and plants that are rolled onto the existing roofing system with drainage mats and root barriers as required

2. Intensive or extensive green roofs

Intensive/active green roofs have a deep growing medium that supports a variety of landscape design and growth. By contrast, an extensive green roof has a shallow growing medium and the landscaping is designed to be more self-sustaining, requiring less maintenance than an intensive system. Extensive green roofs are less expensive than intensive systems, since they are lighter and require less structural support and need less frequent maintenance. The green roof being installed on the City Hall podium roof is considered an extensive green roof.

For more information on green roofs, visit www.toronto.ca/greenroofs and www.greenroofs.org

Nathan Phillips Square Revitalization Project

The City launched a successful international design competition in 2006 to revitalize Nathan Phillips Square (NPS). The winning design team led by Plant Architect Inc. and Shore Tilbe Irwin & Partners will provide architectural and related design services for the project. Construction of the rooftop garden on the City Hall podium roof started in April 2009 for opening in late 2009. Construction of the other elements of the project will take place in subsequent phases over approximately 3½ years and will be scheduled to minimize disruption for users of NPS. The revitalized NPS is targeted for completion in late 2012.

1. Planned improvements to revitalize Nathan Phillips Square

The revitalized Nathan Phillips Square will include:

- a versatile new stage structure with an elegant roof canopy, wide stairs leading to the elevated walkway and performance support space connected below grade;

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- a new public pavilion at the southwest corner of the Square, with rink support facilities, a food concession, public washrooms and a generous roof terrace overlooking the Square;
- a two-level restaurant in the southwest portion of NPS, with outdoor seasonal patio and terrace dining and access to the adjacent overhead walkway and public roof terrace;
- a new glass pavilion at Queen and Bay streets with a visitor/tourist information centre, and elevator access to the overhead walkway;
- redesigned landscaping around the perimeter of the Square, with an increased number of trees, mixed tree species and an innovative soil system;
- a wide variety of sustainable design achievements linked to Toronto's Green Standard such as: a soil regeneration strategy; improved tree planting conditions and increased biomass and number of trees; improved pedestrian environment; controlling light pollution; energy efficient design; renewable energy features; opportunities for public education; attention to the on-site microclimate; and sourcing of local materials;
- a larger and enhanced Peace Garden at a new location in the western landscaped area of the Square;
- extending paving from the Square to the newly landscaped Queen Street forecourt;
- a relocated and redesigned PATH pedestrian walkway connection in the underground garage leading from/to City Hall;
- upgrading the overhead walkways with wood decking, seating, glass balustrades, light wells and improved access;
- a seasonal disappearing water fountain feature in the centre of the Square; and
- new bicycle facilities, including secure bike lockup and shower/change facilities.

2. Project funding

- The overall Project cost to implement the revitalization of NPS is estimated at \$42.70 million, including \$2.3 million for greening the City Hall podium roof.

3. Internal and external stakeholder consultations

- Numerous internal and external stakeholder consultations to provide input on the requirements and detailed design for NPS are almost completed.
- Consultations with event organizers and users of NPS will be held to coordinate construction activities on NPS in order to minimize impacts on activities and events.

4. Nathan Phillips Square Revitalization Public Advisory Group (NPSRPAG)

- NPSRPAG was established by City Council in 2006 to advise the City on the design competition, implementation of the winning design and a new governance model for NPS.
- NPSRPAG, with assistance from the City Manager's Office, is reviewing options and best practices for governance, programming and financing of NPS in order to recommend an appropriate governance structure to ensure the proper management and long-term sustainability of the Square.

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