

CitySCAPES

February 2006

Keeping you informed about the

COORDINATED STREET FURNITURE PROGRAM

Toronto's public realm is a shared resource - a civic space where connections are created between the City and ourselves. Appealing, well-designed, well-maintained and accessible public spaces are recognized as essential in creating a positive urban experience. The City has launched a number of efforts to strengthen, celebrate and ultimately elevate the quality of our public spaces. One such initiative is the coordinated street furniture program.

Over the past decade, a number of new street furniture elements have been added to Toronto's streetscape. Some items such as the post and ring bike stand, have been a success. However all of these pieces, including transit shelters, waste/recycling bins, benches and phone booths have been designed as separate elements. Publication vending boxes have also grown in number and vie for space and prominence with other street furniture on the public sidewalk.



A coordinated street furniture program will harmonize the design and placement of these features in an aesthetically appealing, functional and accessible manner.

A number of cities in the United States, Europe, Australia and Canada have recently carried out coordinated street furniture programs. With the expiry of transit shelter and waste/recycling bin contracts in 2007 and 2009 respectively, the City of Toronto has an exciting opportunity to create a new look and feel for our streetscapes by implementing a coordinated street furniture program.

The benefits of a coordinated street furniture program include:

- Making streets more pedestrian friendly, enhancing public circulation and safety, and promoting a positive Toronto identity
- Improving the appearance, quality, and functionality of street furniture
- Integrating separate furniture items for improved ease of use and more effective placement
- Providing an opportunity to reduce the total amount of advertising while simultaneously increasing its overall value and revenue for the City

- Coordinating the placement of advertising on street furniture to make streets more attractive
- Implementing and harmonizing rules, bylaws and regulations for street furniture
- Achieving a higher level of service and maintenance at no cost to the City
- Ensuring flexibility in the type, placement and scale of furniture items in each district of the city



The public consultation process

Public feedback and advice is being sought through a consultation process that in the end will lead to a well-designed program of street furniture for Toronto residents. The feedback gathered from the public, Business Improvement Areas, the design industries and other parties will be incorporated into Design and Policy Guidelines. These Guidelines will form the design expectations put forth in a Request For Proposals (RFP) for new street furniture. It is expected that the RFP will be issued in the latter half of 2006.

Several opportunities are available for providing feedback:

1. The City is setting up a website www.toronto.ca/streetfurniture that will contain information about the project, a public survey and opportunity to submit comments.
2. The City will be conducting a series of public meetings in the north, south, east and west districts of Toronto. Meeting locations and times will be posted on the website and announced through the media.
3. The City will be conducting "street" surveys in public areas across Toronto.
4. Ratepayer groups and Business Improvement Areas across the City will be contacted and asked to provide comments.
5. Feedback from the design community will be garnered through collaborative forums involving the Mayor's Roundtable on a Beautiful City and the Design Exchange.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is street furniture?

Street furniture consists of different elements installed in the public right-of-way for the convenience and use of the public. These elements include, but are not limited to, items such as transit shelters, waste/recycling bins and benches.

2. What is the process for securing a new system of street furniture?

The City is running a public consultation process in order to help prepare Design and Policy Guidelines. Once these guidelines are complete, a report will be submitted to Council and subsequently, a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be developed and issued. The intent is to encourage local and international design expertise as an element of the proposed bids to achieve a well-designed and functional product. In effect, we want to deliver a strong message that “design matters” in the context of the proposal. These proposals will be evaluated and City Council will select a winner or winners. The winning submission(s) will be implemented over time throughout the City.

3. Some BIA/Resident Associations have designed and maintained their own street furniture items. How will they be affected under a coordinated street furniture program?

Furniture that has already been purchased by individual associations will not be affected. Discussions with these groups will help decide how existing items can be incorporated and which new amenities can be customized for specific areas.

4. How will the city decide where to place the new items on the street?

The City is preparing a Streetscape Manual that will – among other things – set out the parameters for placement of new street furniture. The manual will address technical requirements and issues of public circulation and access associated with street furniture. Each element will meet specific design and placement criteria. Input from the public will be used to formulate these criteria.

5. What street furniture items are being considered by the City?

The City is responsible for the provision of a number of street furniture items. However other items in the public realm are controlled by private and public agencies. There are a number of items that the City is considering to be part of the street furniture program in terms of incorporating into the RFP or providing a better level of coordination. They include transit shelters, litter/recycling bins, benches, newspaper vending boxes, banners, telephone booths, bicycle racks, public toilets, light standards, and poster kiosks.

6. How will existing pilot projects fit into the coordinated street furniture program?

The City is committed to delivering clean and beautiful public streets in which all elements are coordinated and harmonious. This street furniture program will be an important aspect in achieving that goal. The feedback from the various pilot projects that are currently in place (waste/recycling bins, publication boxes, and information pillars) will help inform the guidelines for the design of new street furniture.

Stay Involved!

If you need more information about the coordinated street furniture program or would like to provide us with your comments, please contact us.

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"The sidewalks are where people become Torontonians. The public realm allows us to come together as citizens, residents, and visitors to enjoy, discover and appreciate this wonderful city. The Co-ordinated Street Furniture program will not only improve, but elevate and celebrate Toronto's urban beauty."

- Mayor David Miller

Public Workshops

To learn more about the coordinated street furniture program or provide opinions about the project, attend one of our public workshops in your area. All workshops will take place from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Please call 416-338-1066.

- Tuesday, February 28**
Etobicoke Civic Centre
- Wednesday, March 1**
Scarborough Civic Centre
- Monday, March 6**
Metro Hall
- Tuesday, March 7**
North York Civic Centre

