

**City Council****Notice of Motion**

MM28.13	ACTION			Ward:All
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**Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS): Protecting and increasing access to publicly secured open spaces - by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Adam Vaughan**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Planning and Growth Management Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Adam Vaughan, recommends that:

1. City Council request the City Manager to prepare a report that identifies all privately owned public spaces in the City of Toronto.
2. City Council request the City Manager to report on a strategy to ensure that all privately owned public spaces have visible signage indicating the space is open to the public; this includes, but is not limited to, parks, plazas, open spaces, squares and walkways.
3. City Council direct that the reports requested in Recommendations 1 and 2 above be submitted to the Planning and Growth Management Committee by June of 2013.

**Summary**

Toronto is becoming an increasingly dense city with an additional 134,000 new residents added between 2001 and 2011. The majority of those new inhabitants are living in condominiums. In the past 10 years, 121,210 new condo or apartment units have been created. Since 2006, over 90 percent of all residential applications have been for multi-unit dwellings. It is anticipated that this trend will continue as Toronto's population is expected to grow by 160,000 over the next 10 years with just as many new condo or apartment units added.

These vertical homeowners are joining apartment residents and office tower workers that use public spaces as their backyards, living rooms and lunch counters. It is well established that public spaces provide a social meeting place and there is increasing evidence demonstrating that open spaces can have a positive impact on physical health, mental well-being and even longevity. As the City of Toronto plans to continue building vertically, it must ensure that its urban parks, plazas and squares are accessible.

The City's Planning Division has been very successful at securing new open spaces through

Section 37 agreements. These spaces are publically accessible but privately owned and maintained at the cost of the landowner. Since 2000, at least 1 million square feet have been added in over 27 of these new privately owned public spaces. Other publicly accessible open spaces include plazas in front of office buildings and green spaces surrounding "tower" apartments through density bonuses negotiated primarily in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

While the City has been successful at adding new publicly accessible space, many of these places are not well used. Experience from other North American cities demonstrates that the largest barrier to these spaces is a lack of awareness that they are open to the public. New York, San Francisco and other cities require signage at privately accessible open spaces that indicate they are available for public use.

This Motion seeks to increase the use of privately owned public spaces through designated signage.

(Submitted to City Council on November 27 and 28, 2012 as MM28.13)

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM28.13