

December 16, 2011

Ms Candy Davidovits
Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Ms Davidovits:

On behalf of CNIB, I am writing in support of the City of Toronto's decision to review the "InfoToGo pillars" under Coordinated Street Furniture Program and endorse the position of the Harbord Village Residents' Association. Any proposed design and installation for street furniture should be examined closely to ensure that they adhere to the accessibility and safety guidelines outlined in both the "Vibrant Streets" design and policy guidelines and the "City of Toronto's Accessibility Design Guidelines."

According to the "Vibrant Streets" policy and guidelines document, "street furniture elements should be designed to accommodate people with disabilities, such as those with physical and visual disabilities or impairment, as well as children and the elderly," (p 20). Providing barrier free walking spaces and ensuring safe way finding is critical to ensuring that equal opportunities exist for all persons to remain active and independent within their communities, regardless of their ability.

The City of Toronto's Accessibility Design Guidelines states: "Aside from responding to the needs of people with disabilities, increasing accessibility leads to increased opportunities for people with disabilities to access employment and to fully participate in the social, cultural, recreational, economic and political life of Toronto," (p 1).

We encourage the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee to balance all opportunities against the principle of "optimizing independent access to persons with disabilities but also to improve access for all," (p 1, City of Toronto's Accessibility Design Guidelines).

CNIB is a registered charity, passionately provided community-based support, knowledge and a national voice to ensure Canadians who are blind or partially sighted, have the confidence, skills and opportunities to fully participate in life.

Sincerely,



Linda Goldblatt
Executive Director,
Ontario

