



CITYPLACE AND FORT YORK BIA

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Infrastructure and Environment Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Members of the Infrastructure & Environment Committee,

RE: IE12.5 – Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan

I am writing to express our support of the Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan (PRP), a transformative initiative that establishes shared principles and identifies opportunities that will help to redefine the identity, access and experience of Toronto's Central Waterfront.

CityPlace and Fort York BIA represents over 300 commercial property owners and commercial tenants from Spadina to Strachan Avenues and from the south side of Front Street to the north side of Lake Shore Boulevard West and Fleet Street. Located along the south edge of the Fort York National Historic Site, the heart of The Bentway is within the BIA. The existing skating loop, amphitheatre, signage and wayfinding and larger public activation draws people to this unique infrastructure below the Gardiner Expressway. The Bentway activation and public realm improvements support a symbiotic relationship with BIA, which will only be strengthened by the public realm redevelopments extending to the east and west. These special moments invite people to enjoy the unique urban fabric of Toronto which makes our City such a special place to live, work and play.

The BIA and the PRP are very much aligned, especially with the nearly completed CityPlace and Fort York BIA Streetscape Master Plan. Both the PRP and the BIA Master Plan strategically consider how to improve the public realm, create vibrant and safe streets and support placemaking opportunities.

Having followed the evolution of the Under Gardiner PRP, we are inspired by its commitment to innovation, sustainability, and community-centric design. The plan details a comprehensive vision for repurposing the under-utilized spaces beneath the Gardiner Expressway into a cohesive, active corridor of dynamic, inclusive, and environmentally-responsive public spaces. As Toronto continues to densify, this plan responds to the growing demands of communities along the corridor and ensures that we are collectively creating affordable, liveable, and accessible neighbourhoods across the waterfront.

The PRP's guiding principles, centered on safety, ecological stewardship, connectivity, active transportation and cultural enrichment, resonate deeply with CityPlace and Fort York BIA.

These principles are echoed in the BIA Master Plan that focuses on:

- Building vibrant streets;
- Creating safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Leveraging green infrastructure in the public right-of-way to strengthen placemaking;
- Creating strong links to destinations that include public parks and spaces, POPS, and unique landscapes such as The Bentway initiatives; and
- Creating community building opportunities through social gathering, public art and performance art opportunities.

The BIA has gained the support of The Bentway for the CityPlace and Fort York BIA Streetscape Master Plan and we equally support the PRP initiatives that will bring new life to the City of Toronto.

Furthermore, the process of crafting the PRP has been rooted in stakeholder and community engagement. Through extensive consultations and collaborative partnerships, the process has made room for local voices to inform the plan every step of the way.

As our city and the waterfront continues to evolve, it is imperative that we embrace forward-thinking initiatives like the PRP.

I urge the Infrastructure and Environment Committee to lend their full support to the Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan and champion its implementation. Together, we have an opportunity to create a legacy of enduring impact for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jesse Topliffe
Chair, Board of Management