



Friday, March 22, 2024

Attn: Infrastructure and Environment Committee City of Toronto

Re: Infrastructure and Environment Committee - Meeting 12

Meeting Date and time: March 27, 2024 - 9:30 AM

Agenda Item: Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan

I am writing to express my 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.

As the Executive Director at Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC), I can attest to the importance of this work. Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre has benefited from many collaborations with The Bentway. WNC has participated in activities that include art activations and skating trips for our families and children's programs.

Having followed the evolution of the Under Gardiner PRP, I am inspired by its commitment to innovation, sustainability, and community-centric design. The plan details a comprehensive vision for repurposing the underutilized 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 Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre. At WNC, it is important for us to ensure that our members have access to all parts of our community. The Under Gardiner PRP is able to provide members access to urban spaces that help foster cultural appreciation, creativity, social cohesion and connectivity among the community.

Furthermore, the process of crafting the PRP's 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Francis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Natasha Francis
Executive Director