

PROJECT: UNDER GARDINER



Supporting Quotes

"What excites us is thinking about not just building a space, but creating a place with a variety of activities for all kinds of people where they can gather and feel a sense of community and belonging. We are making this donation to all of you - the neighbours, people in the GTA and all our visitors. If we can help create a warm welcoming place where you can come to meet a friend, to walk, to cycle, to play, to eat a variety of street foods, watch a performance, listen to music or buy fresh vegetables at a market – we will be thrilled."

Judy Matthews

"I thank Judy and Will Matthews for this generous and transformative donation, which will help bridge the divide between our city and our waterfront with creativity, beauty and vision. As our city grows, we must focus on innovative projects like this to create and care for public space in Toronto."

John Tory, Mayor of Toronto

"This is wonderful act of generosity and a fantastic new model for public space in Toronto. It will bring life and activity to a formerly sterile area of the city and will offer new connections to the revitalized waterfront."

John Campbell, CEO, Waterfront Toronto

"The Gardiner project will not only create an important new public space for 70,000 residents, it has the potential to become a new world-class Toronto destination for all."

Joe Cressy, Councillor for Ward 20

"Our growing neighbourhoods along Toronto's Waterfront will be transformed by a project of scope and scale. This will knit together our communities, open spaces, transportation corridors and cultural institutions."

Mike Layton, Councillor for Ward 19

"This generous donation for Project Under Gardiner can allow us to re-imagine the Gardiner Expressway underpass from desolate barrier to a ribbon of possibility. A place where the communities united by the Gardiner can work together to create a dynamic public space, a living link joining the city and its Waterfront."

Lai King-Hum, President of CityPlace Residents Association

"We are very enthusiastic about this announcement. It will bring our community into an innovative project that will join us with the rest of Toronto in a celebration of art, music and urban life. We look forward to having a venue close by to enjoy and explore with our friends and families. It will be an area of events and exhibits that we can sample or spend a whole day taking in. We look forward to seeing the project evolve and to experiencing the arts on our doorstep."

Heather Johnson, Chair, Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association

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"A 10.5 acre hidden resource is waiting to be discovered between Exhibition Place and the Railway Lands community. The re-imagination of this stretch of vacant land under the Gardiner has the potential to connect 70,000 residents to a linear spine of diverse active and passive spaces and places. It links our past with our future and establishes a totally new way for city hall to embrace transformative city building."

Paul Bedford, Former Toronto Chief Planner

"As cities densify, we begin to view lost or underutilized spaces in new ways. This proposal is a visionary approach to celebrating and inhabiting a spectacular, dramatic space, stitching together a series of existing areas to provide a front door to Fort York, one of the Toronto's most significant historical resources."

Jennifer Keesmaat, City of Toronto Chief Planner

"It's exciting to see that the Gardiner, which we've come to know as a lightning rod issue, has the potential to become a creative canvas animated by the community. With 100K more people arriving to Toronto each year, adequate public spaces become harder to find and carve out. This is a brilliant combination of vision, need, generous philanthropy and a great talent team to see it realized."

Sevaun Palvetzian, CEO, CivicAction

This project shows the leadership of Toronto in creating strong urban realm within a challenging context. Concord Adex is fully in support of this exciting new initiative to beautify and animate the area under the Gardiner. Concord started our own Gardiner beautification project through the work of Pierre Poussin, a local artist, to create "mitosis" in the space under the Gardiner just east of Dan Leckie Way.

Gabriel Leung, Vice President, Development, ConcordAdex

"The Under the Gardiner Project is an imaginative, even magical, undertaking that brings together private philanthropy, public stewardship and community participation to imaginatively celebrate our public places and spaces. It will be a wonderful, historic gift from this generation to future Torontonians."

David Crombie, Former Mayor of Toronto (1972-78)

"As Toronto continues to intensify and urbanize, the importance of providing open spaces and pedestrian/cycling connections becomes increasingly paramount in ensuring the continued vitality of our City. This project provides a key opportunity to get City-building right by linking a critical void in our urban fabric to a series of open spaces in the west core, particularly linking the newly developing Garrison Point community that will feature pedestrian and cycle bridges and provide people as far north as Trinity Bellwoods access to the waterfront."

Steve Diamond, President of Diamondcorp, developer of Garrison Point

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"In the turmoil of debating the future of the Gardiner Expressway a small group of people turned the problem upside down and organized a stunning plan to transform the ugly, unused, hard space under the Gardiner Expressway into a special place. A place for people, for art, for play, and a bold landscape for innovation. This projects helps to define Toronto as a global leader in the development of great public space. Together we are redefining the commons...as expressed by this important project under the Gardiner Expressway."

Geoff Cape, Founder and CEO, Evergreen

"Judy and Wil Matthews' extraordinary gift will transform the public realm in southwest downtown Toronto. Complementing the new Fort York Visitors Centre, this project will welcome thousands to explore the Gardiner's arcaded vistas and landscaped spaces between its piers and come away impressed by Toronto's endless possibilities for reinvention and renewal."

Jeff Evenson, Friends of Fort York

"This project will not only link the communities of Fort York, City Place, and Liberty Village, it will bring added interest and vibrancy to the public realm in these areas. Local residents, people from across Toronto and visitors alike will be drawn to the area to experience this repurposing of a neglected space. It's wonderful that someone has seen the potential and has provided the means to make this project happen."

Vicki Trottier, Fort York Neighbourhood Association

"The "intensification" of our downtown continues apace. What has been sorely missing with all this private development of condos and clubs is an investment in imagination and resources to enrich the everyday experience of everything in-between. Transforming mono-functioning infrastructure like the Gardner is key to leveraging all the investments that have been made to finally create a stronger, and more beautiful civic arena. Public Work and the larger team behind this project have the ideas and the talent to make this happen. At the historic "head" of Spadina, Public Work is already helping us completely transform One Spadina Crescent, and I am thrilled to see that we will finally be attending to the "foot" at the waterfront."

Richard M. Sommer, Dean, John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design

"This project could be nothing short of transformational, not only for the adjacent communities of Liberty Village, Fort York, CityPlace and the Waterfront, but for the entire city of Toronto and how we interact and engage with our public spaces. The residents and the whole city of Toronto should applaud such philanthropy and commitment to something that's greater than just ourselves. Truly visionary!"

Todd Hofley, President, Liberty Village Residents' Association

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“One of the most exciting things about living in 21st Century Toronto is the pace of change and scale of ambition, and this great project for a magical haven under the Gardiner Expressway is wonderfully imaginative – joining other world cities in the inventive ways they are starting to use the unique spaces under their urban freeways. Luminato has always been keen to open up unexpected urban spaces for culture, and we’re very excited to support these visionary plans as they develop.”

Anthony Sargent, CEO, Luminato

“This is one of the most exciting public space projects ever in Canada. This visionary project will transform a forgotten dead space into a cornerstone for connecting and celebrating our city. It breaks new ground by bringing together funders, partners and the City. Toronto is very lucky to have such generous, farsighted philanthropists as Judy and Wil Matthews.”

Dave Harvey, Executive Director, Park People

“Thanks to a magnificent philanthropic donation, Toronto now has the extraordinary opportunity to transform a very large derelict wasteland area under the Gardiner Expressway into an amazing linear park. Project Under Gardiner will become a touchstone project for cities looking to create innovative downtown urban parks.”

Anne Golden, Co-Director, Ryerson City Building Institute

“Partnerships and a genuine love of Toronto are what the city thrives on and Project: Under Gardiner is strong example of this. This exciting project will bring people together, and make use of public space to connect our city.”

Rahul K. Bhardwaj, President and CEO of the Toronto Foundation

“This promises to be a new icon of vibrant city life, which is so important in destination marketing. Because it builds on – and under – the unique architecture of Toronto, this new space will itself be distinctively Toronto and a place that visitors will put high on their list to experience when they travel here.”

Johanne Bélanger, President and CEO, Tourism Toronto

“The tall “cathedral” section of the Gardiner Expressway in the Exhibition and Fort York area provides a unique opportunity to create a safe, attractive and direct walking trail that will link together the many, currently disjointed walking routes and destinations in the area, and Walk Toronto is very pleased that this project proposes to bring this potential to fruition.”

Walk Toronto

“Project: Under Gardiner is great news for the waterfront and for the city. It has the potential to enhance the experience for the 17 million visitors who come to the waterfront area every year, and will provide a broader range of things to do and places to see.”

Carol Jolly, Executive Director, The Waterfront Business Improvement Area (BIA)

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“The prospect of an animated public space underneath the Gardiner Expressway running west from Spadina to Strachan is very exciting for all its neighbours. Over the past fifteen or so years several new vigorous communities have grown up in this vicinity which until recently has been primarily industrial and commercial. Now we have Wellington Place (bounded by Spadina, Front, Bathurst and King Streets), Liberty Village, Bathurst Quay and City Place filling up with new residents and businesses. These have grown largely in isolation owing to geography and features such as the rail corridor. One clear benefit of the proposed link is the provision of needed connective tissue between these communities, effectively creating a web of exciting neighbourhoods. More than this, it has the potential to be an iconic public attraction, drawing visitors from across the City and the broader tourist community, a new jewel in Toronto’s crown.”

Scott James, Secretary, Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association

“Our West Block development is committed to transforming the historical Loblaw Groceteria building into an enhanced daily needs retailing experience and activating the area below the Gardiner Expressway into a unique space filled with engaging moments. We are truly excited the Matthews family and the City of Toronto are collaborating to expand the vision on a scale that is destined to be a City landmark.”

Tony Grossi, President, Wittington Properties Limited