



October 30, 2007

City forges partnership with developers and arts community at West Queen West Triangle

The City today announced a major step forward in resolving outstanding issues around the future development of the West Queen West Triangle.

Mayor David Miller said, "We are delighted that the stage is set for the West Queen West Triangle to become one of the leading artistic hubs in Canada. This neighbourhood has the fifth-highest concentration of artists in Canada. By reaching agreements with the developers, local artists and the surrounding neighbourhood, the City has ensured this community is poised for significant cultural and economic gains for the city."

"The City worked with all parties involved to achieve a balance that includes no net loss of employment, the retention of artists, the necessary roads and a park for a liveable neighbourhood and local sustainability," said Councillor Adam Giambrone. "We are also very pleased, that as a result of this collaborative effort, \$1 million is now available for re-developing the Carnegie Library into a performing arts hub. West Queen West will be known as the place where artists can live and work in harmony with residential development."

Councillor Giambrone added, "On behalf of the City, I would like to thank Toronto Artscape and the community group Active 18 for helping us ensure that the needs of the neighbourhood and the local arts community were a part of the West Queen West planning process."

The City now has agreements in place with Landmark Development, which is developing condominiums at 150 Sudbury St. and Medallion Corporation, which is developing 45 Lisgar St.

The West Queen West project is a prime example of several City divisions - including Planning, Economic Development and Culture, Legal, Transportation, Parks Forestry and Recreation, and Toronto Public Health - working collaboratively with the arts community and developers to protect, maintain and nurture the creative industries.

Fact sheet: the West Queen West Triangle

The West Queen West neighbourhood has the fifth highest concentration of artists in any location in Canada. Through innovative partnerships between the City, the development community, not-for-profit arts sector and affordable housing organizations, the West Queen West Triangle will be solidified as an important creative hub.

Two new agreements that have been reached with developers include community contributions:

150 Sudbury St. – West Side Lofts, a Landmark Development Corporation condominium:

- 56,000 square feet sold to Toronto Artscape at a significant discount for artist live/work studios, of which approximately 52 units would be affordable for low-income artists
- \$250,000 towards the cost of relocating the Toronto Public Health offices out of the Beatrice Lilly Centre (also known as the Carnegie Library building)
- \$1 million towards the restoration and conversion of the historic Carnegie Library building from municipal offices to a Performing Arts Hub

45 Lisgar St. - a rental apartment building by Medallion Corporation:

- 10,000 square feet for new offices for Public Health at no cost over a 50-year period
- Toronto Public Health will relocate their offices from the Beatrice Lilly Centre at 1115 Queen Street W. so the building can be converted to a theatre

Previously signed agreements with developers also include community contributions:

1171 Queen St. W. – Bohemian Embassy Condos by Baywood Homes:

- \$500,000 for community arts infrastructure

48 Abell St. – a developer, Verdiroc, with an affordable housing provider, St. Clare's Multi-Faith:

- 190 affordable housing units, funded through the City and which include 28 artist live/work studios at affordable rents
- a minimum of six artist work studios (approximately 3600 sq. ft. of space) along the new Creative Mews - studios will be sold to the City at below market rates

Additional applications were recently received by the City for redevelopment projects in West Queen West. These applications, if successful, will also be required to provide community benefits. These new locations are:

- 1093 Queen Street W.
- 1155 Queen Street W.
- 1181 Queen Street W.
- 2-90 Lisgar St.

Performing Arts Hub

- The City's 2006 vision for the West Queen West Triangle includes the creation of a Performing Arts Hub.
- The City's Planning and Culture divisions have been working towards the restoration of the heritage building and its conversion to a Performing Arts Hub for more than two years.
- Redevelopment and rising rents in the West Queen West Triangle are pushing small and medium sized not-for-profit performing arts organizations out of buildings in the area.
- The City will invest Section 37 funds from new residential condominium developments to retain local arts jobs.
- The new Performing Arts Hub will be located at 1115 Queen St. W., currently known as the Beatrice Lillie Centre that houses Toronto Public Health offices.
- The Beatrice Lillie building, built in 1908 as the Carnegie Library, was given as a gift to the City of Toronto. It is a magnificent heritage building, with very high ceilings (over 20 feet) and no pillars in the centre space of the building. The building is well-suited to house performing arts. Beatrice Lilly, born in Parkdale, was an internationally acclaimed comedian.

How arts contribute to the City's economy

- Cultural activities generate an estimated \$8.5 billion (2001) GDP for the City's economy
- The Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) accounts for nearly one-quarter of national employment in creative industries (611,000 people in 2001)
- Creative industries represented close to six per cent of the total Toronto CMA labour force in 2001
- Between 1991 and 2004, total employment in creative industries grew annually at 3.1 per cent, compared to 2.3 per cent for

the total Toronto CMA labour force

Source: Imagine a Toronto. Strategies for a Creative City (2006), Gertler M. et. al.

Media contacts:

Kevin Beaulieu, Executive Assistant to Councillor Adam Giambrone, 416-338-5305, kbeauli@toronto.ca; Gary Wright, Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, 416-392-8772, gwright1@toronto.ca; Rita Davies, Executive Director, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, 416-397-5323, rdavies@toronto.ca