

Reports call for accessible, affordable service

HEALTHY TRANSIT

By Jake Tobin Garrett

A portion of new funding for transit expansion should be used to improve affordability of the service for low-income residents, recommends a report to the Board of Health on Monday.

The report is one of two from Toronto Public Health that aims to inform the city's ongoing official plan review process and the city's transit funding consultations from the perspective of health and equity.

"Toronto Public Health [has] a long-standing interest and concern in equity issues," Toronto Public Health healthy public policy director **Monica Campbell** told *NRU*.

With a potentially large revenue stream coming online for transit expansion, it's time to consider how to deal with transit affordability, Campbell said. She added it's an opportunity to have a conversation about the health impacts of transit access and affordability on low income-residents who often rely more heavily on transit than the private car.

She highlighted concerns about lack of transit access such as "how it prevents [low income residents] from accessing employment because they can't afford a metro pass, how it really compromises their ability to buy healthy food because they may be living in areas that are food deserts [and] how it really impacts their ability in some cases

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Integrating art space and development

RENEWING QUEEN WEST

By John Michael McGrath

In the west end of downtown Toronto, activists, artists, councillors and developers are finding ways to cooperate so that the condominium development boom does not drive out artists. The example of West Queen West, say proponents, serves as a model of how to ensure affordable space remains in development-heavy areas.

One recent example is the Triangle Lofts. In 2010, **Urbancorp** sold at cost the lower three storeys of its 18-storey Westside Gallery Lofts at 38 Abell Street to Artscape, a non-profit housing and gallery space organization, as a Section 37 benefit.

Tim Jones, CEO and President of Artscape, says his goal in projects like the Triangle Lofts is to avoid the "Soho effect", where artists initially move in to a depressed neighbourhood and set off a wave of gentrification that eventually pushes them out of the neighbourhood.

Artscape's Jones says that the developments along Queen West give the city a road map of how to tackle affordability issues beyond just the arts sphere. "We're a pioneer in this area, and I think it's part of why the city has started to look at this," said Jones.

"I think as a result of this project and the great work Habitat for Humanity is doing, I think the city is

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UPCOMING DATES

- MARCH 25**
Board of Health, 1:00 p.m., committee room 1
- MARCH 27**
Aboriginal Affairs Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- Toronto Preservation Board**, 2:00 p.m., committee room 4
- MARCH 28**
Budget Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- APRIL 3-4**
Council, 9:30 a.m., council chambers
- APRIL 8**
Government Management Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- APRIL 9**
Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., Etobicoke Civic Centre
- North York Community Council**, 9:30 a.m., North York Civic Centre
- Scarborough Community Council**, 9:30 a.m., Scarborough Civic Centre
- Toronto and East York Community Council**, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- APRIL 10**
Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- APRIL 11**
Planning and Growth Management Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- APRIL 15**
Parks and Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- APRIL 16**
Economic Development Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1



Biodiversity guidelines released

GREEN ROOF BOOST

By Jake Tobin Garrett

The city hopes to boost the biodiversity of green roofs in Toronto with new guidelines that include tips and information for landscape architects and designers.

Some green roofs have been designed to encourage biodiversity, but the city saw an opportunity in providing best practices to encourage professionals to create more diverse natural environments, according to environmental planning acting project manager **Jane Welsh**.

The city's green roof by-law was adopted in 2009 and the guidelines work to complement existing green roof construction guidelines already in place.

Landscape architect **Scott Torrance (Scott Torrance Landscape Architect Inc.)**, who led the development of the guidelines for the city, told *NRU* that the guidelines give designers "some simple strategies to increase the ecological performance of green roofs."

Creating a more diversified natural environment on rooftops helps replace habitat lost due to urbanization and provides spaces for insects, bees, birds and butterflies. Torrance also said a more biodiverse roof can help reduce the heat-island effect by releasing more cool moisture into the air.

However, growing conditions on rooftops in the city can be quite different from those



Green roof designed by Scott Torrance Architect Inc. with Levitt Goodman Architects Ltd. for Native Child and Family Services of Toronto

on the ground. "Definitely you've got a harsher condition that you're dealing with," Welsh said, citing extreme wind and heat. "You have to have vegetation material that can manage that condition."

These harsher conditions can mean native plants are unable to withstand the rooftop environment. "We do generally try to encourage the use of native plants where possible," she said, but added that "any landscape architect will tell you that you have to be smart about it."

The other factor in creating biodiverse green roofs is substrate depth—the amount of soil and material for growing plants. Welsh said that the current green roof by-law stipulates a minimum depth of 100mm, with anything more shallow needing proof the plants can survive.

Torrance highlighted the positive effect of providing a substrate of at least 150mm to increase the potential for successful biodiverse environments. CONTINUED PAGE 5 ▶

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CITY IN BRIEF

Feds promise \$70 billion for municipalities

The 2013 budget from the Government of Canada will include [\\$70 billion in “new and existing”](#) infrastructure funding for cities, provinces and territories over 10

years, including an increase in transfers from the gas tax and GST rebates for municipalities. The budget also includes a “Building Canada Fund” comprising a \$4 billion National Infrastructure Fund and

a \$10 billion Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Fund.

11 Wellesley will include park

A parcel of provincially-owned property between

Bay and Yonge on Wellesley Street, sold to Lanterra Developments earlier this month, will include a park despite the Ontario government’s decision not to put the sale on hold.

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HEALTHY TRANSIT

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to seek medical services [or] visit a doctor.”

Without adequate transit service, she added, low-income residents are at greater risk of being cut off from their community. “You are more at risk for being socially isolated because you just can’t move about the city and you can’t visit friends—you can’t have social networks to the same degree that you could if you had strong mobility,” said Campbell.

One of the challenges to addressing transit affordability, she said, is that so much of the operating revenue of the Toronto Transit Commission comes from the fare box. Ongoing funding constraints also make it harder to solve access and affordability.

Long-time transit advocate and Board of Health committee member Councillor **Gord Perks** told *NRU* that Toronto has received less operating funding from senior levels of government than any other municipality in North America and Europe. As a result, he said, Toronto suffers from more crowded buses, subways and streetcars and less frequent service, while riders pay higher fares.

Reduced transit passes for low-income residents was one of the strategies highlighted by Toronto Public Health to address the issue of affordability. A review of subsidized transit passes provided in other Canadian cities found that “very frequently the funding is coming from the municipality,” Campbell said, although she noted sometimes it comes from provincial transfers.

Councillor and TTC Chair **Karen Stintz** told *NRU* that the TTC does “have a lot of variable fares,” including discounted fares for seniors and students. She also noted that they’ve

recently changed the rules on metropasses to allow them to be transferrable.

In terms of providing a discounted fare for low income residents, she said that wasn’t the place of the TTC. “We’ll work with partner agencies, but we don’t get into identifying who is low income.”

Perks said that he was concerned about mixing roles when providing subsidized transit passes. “I think that we should be funding social services through social services funding and increasing social assistance rates that the province offers,” but added that “we should be funding transit through transit funding.”

“Given that the province isn’t really solving social assistance rates, it’s difficult to know what to do,” he said.

Stintz said that the TTC “recognize[s] that when we’re talking about fares that we need to keep any increases at or below the rate of inflation because of how it impacts the users of the system. And we also know that as we talk about revenue tools we need to be quite mindful about how they impact families that are struggling right now.”

Indeed, one of the Toronto Public Health reports suggests health and equity criteria that could be used when evaluating potential new official plan policies for transportation and any potential revenue tools.

“We’re not the economists coming out saying use this revenue tool versus that,” Campbell said. However, she urged that any potential unintended impacts on low-income residents be addressed no matter which revenue tools are selected. 

RENEWING QUEEN WEST

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seeing this can be a real tool,” he said. Toronto City Council passed a motion on March 21 asking staff to report back later this year on ways to facilitate the use of Section 37 to build affordable housing.

“I’ve been doing this for 15 years and it’s always about painting the artist as the hapless victim of urban development,” said Jones. “We believe at Artscape that artists are actually powerful agents of change.” The typical portrayal of artists as victims can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, he said, preferring to identify potential solutions that retain live and work space for artists in spite of new residential development.

According to ward councillor **Ana Bailão**, developers understand the importance of art in the community—and see it adding value to their properties.

“You know, they like it,” Bailão told NRU. “They understand it’s important that this part of the city stay a home for artists and art studios.”

In another development in 2012, Bailão secured space for the Toronto Media Arts Cluster on Lisgar Street, another Section 37 benefit negotiated with Urbancorp. The Toronto Media Arts Cluster will house six member organizations in 40,000 square feet of space. The Lisgar building is under construction and the Media Cluster and Urbancorp are finalizing their paperwork this month.

In ward 19, east of Bailão’s ward, is the MOCCA development at 952 Queen West. Councillor **Mike Layton** hopes to encourage Urbancorp to set aside retail and display space available for artists. The 952 Queen West site is still a preliminary application, but the developer is asking for a nine-storey building of 151 one- and two-bedroom units.

Layton says his constituents are at least as concerned about the displacement of artists as they are about the increased density in his ward.

“Down on Niagara (Street), [89-109 Niagara](#), the first thing residents said was ‘where are the artists gonna go?’ They cared less about the height and more about the artists,” said Layton. The former coffin factory, owned by the National Casket Company between 1906 and 1973, houses what concerned residents call a “unique and diverse live-work community” of artists.

The tension between gentrification and the preservation of artist-friendly spaces in the core lies at the heart of “creative class” theory expounded by **Richard Florida**, the American urban guru who came to Toronto in 2007 to become the



Aerial view of Queen Street West

SOURCE: PHOTOS.COM

Director of the **Martin Prosperity Institute**.

Last Friday, at a debate on Florida’s ideas held at Praxis Theatre on Queen West, proponents and critics argued about the impact of the ‘creative class’ on the working poor.

“You’ve got half the workforce in service-class jobs,” **Kevin Stolarick**, research director at the Martin Prosperity Institute, told NRU. Stolarick argues that growing inequality is more worrisome, though he says that when combined with gentrification it can mean people being priced further away from jobs and services. He points to the work of David Hulchanski and the “Three Cities in Toronto” report as an example of a worrying trend.

“It’s the fact that people are losing their better-paying jobs, middle class jobs, and it’s been happening for a very long time.” Stolarick, whose statistical work underpins much of Florida’s work, says it’s unfair to blame the “creative class” for broader socioeconomic trends unfolding in city cores around the world.

“Globalization and the loss of middle-class jobs is a terrible thing. We need to fix affordable housing and the value of people’s work—these are problems and if we don’t fix them they will be enormous,” said Stolarick. He added that cities are best suited to solving the problems of urban displacement and development, but lack the powers and resources to effect change—a sentiment echoed by Layton.

The councillor noted that if a developer doesn’t agree to a section 37 provision, the options are limited for other remedies that would retain live-work space for artists.

“When you lose that tool in the box, well, you work for NRU, is there another tool I can use? I’ve got a Masters in Planning and I haven’t found that tool,” said Layton. While there are provisions in the law to require a developer to replace existing rental space, it becomes more difficult to require affordable housing or lower-cost commercial rental space. **nruc**

CITY IN BRIEF

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According to the **Globe and Mail**, one possibility is a single-tower development with a park on the site. Ward 27 councillor **Kristyn Wong-Tam** spent months in 2012 trying to persuade the province to put the 11 Wellesley sale on hold in order to arrange a lease or sale to the city, a proposal that had been supported by the local MPP, **Glen Murray**, now provincial minister of infrastructure.

Forest Manor Road demolition

As part of a revitalization of privately-owned rental apartments at Don Mills and Sheppard, council approved the demolition of existing

rental spaces that will be replaced and supplemented with condominium units. The development marks a substantial intensification at the eastern end of the Sheppard subway line.

Downtown casino has a bad week

The prospects for a casino built in downtown Toronto appeared to dim after Ontario Premier **Kathleen Wynne** instructed Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. to implement a single province-wide hosting fee formula. As a result, OLG will either have to pay the city Toronto much less or all other Ontario

municipalities more to be the site of a casino. Toronto councillors, including some important swing votes such as Economic Development Committee Chair **Michael Thompson**, say that the casino is likely to be rejected if OLG's hosting fee is less than the \$50-million to \$100 million that has been discussed.

Projects win awards

The Ontario Association of Architects has announced the winners of its 2013 OAA awards, which include **MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects Ltd.** for the Regent Park Aquatic Centre

and **Diamond & Schmitt Architects Inc.** for the Evergreen Brickworks Centre for Green Cities. The OAA has also opened the voting for its People's Choice Award, which can be found at www.oaa.on.ca.

Section 37 for housing or transit?

Council passed a motion requesting staff look at ways to expedite the use of Section 37 concessions for affordable housing. The decision came after Deputy Mayor **Doug Holyday** tried to amend the item to include transit in a staff review of eligible projects for Section 37 funds. Holyday's motion failed. **nru**

GREEN ROOF BOOST

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"It's amazing the diversity of plants that can survive in [150mm depth], but anything less than that and it starts to get very challenging," he said.

Many of the city's green roofs are not built to this depth—the guidelines note that deeper roofs may increase costs associated with installation and maintenance. The shallow depths of current green roofs create hot and dry conditions "that are generally only suitable for a few drought tolerant species and minimal biodiversity," according to the guidelines.

Torrance said there are simple, cost-effective ways, such as adding logs, to increase biodiversity that don't require providing additional depth or maintenance.

"All of a sudden [the log] creates microclimates where certain types of insects could live in the shade of that log [and]

certain types of native solitary bees could nest in that log and birds could land on that log."

When designing a green roof it is also important to pay attention to the location of the building and its proximity to ravines and other natural areas.

The right plantings, for example, can support or enhance a transition from the natural to man-made environment.

"By having a biodiverse green roof, maybe with more native plants, then you're not introducing something foreign into the area that's beside a natural area," Welsh said.

Working on the guidelines with Torrance and the city were University of Toronto Centre for Environment adjunct professor Dr. **Brad Bass**, University of Toronto Green Roof Innovation Testing Lab researcher **Scott MacIvor** and landscape designer and horticulturalist **Terry McGlade**. **nru**

STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS

BOARD OF HEALTH

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse: Presentation—The Chief Executive Officer of the [CCSA](#), **Michel Perron**, is scheduled to make a presentation to the Board of Health on ways to enhance government and community collaborations and partnerships.

Reducing Skin Cancer Risk from Indoor Tanning—Staff recommend the Board commend the Ontario government’s move to regulate tanning bed use by young people.



SOURCE: PHOTOS.COM

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Toronto Public Library - 2013 Capital Budget Adjustments—Allows for an increase in the state of good repair budget for two library branches that are receiving Section 37 funds. The Northern District branch will receive more than \$400,000, with \$ 15,968 for the Yorkville branch.

Extension of Toronto Newcomer Initiative contract—Authorizes the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to enter into a new contract with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to receive \$400,000 for the Toronto Newcomer Initiative’s budget for 2013 and 2014. The initiative is entirely paid by the Federal government. [nru](#)



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TORONTO OMB NEWS

Forest Hill tower settlement reached

In a decision issued March 5, board members **Marc C. Denhez** and **Maureen L. Carter-Whitney** scheduled a further prehearing regarding appeals by **Upper Forest Hill Suites II Ltd.** of council's failure to enact an official plan and zoning by-law amendment. The amendments were sought to permit a 16-storey residential building at 2400 Bathurst Street, at Elm Ridge Drive.

The board was informed a settlement that revises the building to 13-storeys has been reached. However, the draft zoning by-law and official plan amendment and *section 37* agreement still need to be finalized.

Planner **Wendy Nott (Walker, Nott, Dragicevic Associates Limited)**, providing evidence for Upper Forest Hill, noted that all 31 rental units located in an existing building will be replaced with different floor spaces and unit types. She also noted there will be 149 parking spaces and two car share spaces.

The board scheduled a further prehearing for March 22.

Solicitors in the case are **David Bronskill** and **Nicholas Staubitz (Goodmans)** representing Upper Forest Hill Suites II Ltd. and **Amanda Hill** representing the City of Toronto. (See OMB Case No. PL120837.)

City motion to dismiss appeal denied

In a decision issued March 15, board member **Mary-Anne Sills** denied a motion by the **City of Toronto** to dismiss appeals by **Yolanda Flanders Developments Inc.** and **2242148 Ontario Limited**. Yolanda/2242148 had appealed the city's failure to enact a zoning by-law and official plan amendment to permit nine and 26-storey towers and six townhouse blocks at 51 Drewry Avenue and 8 to 28 Inez Court, west of Yonge Street.

The proposed development would close part of Inez Court, a municipal road. The city argued that a potential decision by the board approving the amendments would "effectively result in the closure of the Inez Court right-of-way." Only city council can decide whether to close or sell a road—a decision that cannot be appealed, the city argued.

The city contended that the appeal is neither based on land

use planning grounds nor made in good faith. The city also stated that the developer had failed to remove the road from the application, as requested by city council.

In response, Yolanda/2242148 maintained that the city's decision not to close the road "was motivated by spite and malice, and not by good planning." Further, despite not owning the road, Yolanda/2242148 argued it was not prevented "from applying for, and the board from considering, the highest and best planning option for any such lands."

The board agreed, stating additionally that it identified planning issues that warranted adjudication.

Documents provided to the board indicated there had been discussions between city planning and Yolanda/2242148 to convey Inez Court to the developer. However a motion put forward by the ward councillor and adopted by council asked for the removal of the roadway from the application. The board noted that this decision did not cite any land use planning rationale.

Yolanda/2242148 maintained that keeping Inez Court open as part of the development "would result in a significantly less than optimum form of development on the subject lands and would inhibit the efficient use of the neighbourhood's land, infrastructure and services."

The board also pointed out that a decision on the requested amendments would not affect any city decision to refuse the road conveyance. It denied the motion to dismiss.

Solicitors in the case were **John Alati** and **Meaghan McDermid (Davies Howe)** representing Yolanda Flanders Developments Inc. and 2242148 Ontario Limited and **Tom Wall** representing the City of Toronto. (See OMB Case No. PL111252.)

Retail plaza settlement approved

In a decision issued March 12, board member **Jan de Pencier Seaborn** approved a settlement of appeals by **Kingsberg Property Investments Limited** and **Kingsberg Monetary Corporation** of city council's failure to enact a zoning by-law amendment. The amendment would permit development of a commercial plaza with restaurant, retail and personal service use at 850-858 York Mills Road, west of Don Mills Road.

Murray Evans (Evans Planning) provided CONTINUED PAGE 8 

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL AGENDA

The Design Review Panel will consider the following at its meeting Thursday, March 28 at 12:00 p.m. in Committee Room 2.

695 Bay Street & 43-51 Gerrard Street—The panel will review for the first time a proposal by **Great West Life** for a 48-storey tower. Presentations will be made by **Giulio Cescato** of Community Planning, **James Parakh** of urban design, and **Roland rom Colthoff** of RAW Design.

Liberty Village Environmental Assessments—The panel will receive presentations on the Municipal Class Environmental Assessments for the Fort York Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge as well as the Liberty Village New Street. Presentations will be made by **James Parakh** of urban design, **Graig Uens** of Community Planning, **Marilia Cimini** of Transportation Services, **Chris Hardwicke** of &Co, and **Andrew Brown** of **Lea Consulting Ltd.** nru

TORONTO OMB NEWS

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evidence in support of the settlement, arguing the amendment complied with provincial and city policy. Certain transportation access issues still need to be worked out between Kingsberg and its neighbour, **Home Depot Holdings Inc.**, but the board agreed with Evans that these discussions did not necessitate a delay in the zoning by-law amendment approval. The transportation issues will be addressed at the site plan stage.

Evans stated the development will encourage public transit use and pedestrian traffic, adding that the plaza will provide needed services for those who work in the surrounding employment area.

The board allowed the appeal, approving the settlement. It withheld its final order until site plan and transportation matters are resolved.

Solicitors in the case were **Sean Gosnell (Borden Ladner Gervais)** representing Kingsberg Property Investments Limited

and Kingsberg Monetary Corporation, **Patrick Harrington (Aird & Berlis)** representing Home Depot Holdings Inc. and **Tom Wall** representing the **City of Toronto**. (See OMB Case No. PL111112.) nru

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TORONTO PEOPLE

Bill Teron receives CUI Jane Jacobs Award

The **Canadian Urban Institute** has awarded **William “Bill” Teron** the Jane Jacobs Lifetime

Achievement Award. Teron is best known for his work in building Kanata (now part of the City of Ottawa.) Teron was also instrumental in the

development of Toronto’s Harbourfront lands, selling derelict industrial lands to the Federal government at cost. Teron also proposed burying the

Gardiner Expressway in the 1980s, in exchange for the land on which the Gardiner still sits. From 1973 to 1979, Teron was President of the

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. He will receive the award on June 17, at CUI’s annual Urban Leadership Awards Luncheon in Ottawa.