

For Immediate Release

Weston: John Street Community Pilot Project Gets Underway

Pilot Initiative to transform John Street, and demonstrate the potential of the Weston Village area begins Friday, June 15.

Toronto, Ontario – June 15, 2012 – The John Street Community Pilot Project will be a welcomed transformation of the Market area in Weston. The plan calls for the temporary narrowing of the roadway – with the space given over to a public “sidewalk-café-like seating area surrounded by flowers and crowned with festive lights strung from one side of the street to the other. The pilot project will bring animated life to the street and provide a gateway to the John St. Farmers' Market and the Best of Weston Multicultural Festival.

John Street, a secondary retail area that was once the connector to the market space at the railway station, is an important part of Weston's heritage.

This street furniture installation, which will remain throughout the summer, will be constructed in the afternoon and early evening of Friday, June 15. Urban Arts Community Arts Council (located on John Street) will be painting the pavement with colourful graphics to enliven the area. Local residents and businesses are invited to participate in flower planting from 4 to 8pm Friday June 15.

The project is one of the first ‘quick-start’ initiatives to emerge as identified during the Weston 2021 Technical Assistance Panel (TAP), conducted by The Urban Land Institute (ULI) Toronto’s District Council together with its two public-sector partners - the City of Toronto and Metrolinx. As part of a greater City of Toronto Weston 2021, the ULI TAP program was developed to bring together the finest industry expertise to determine how to best leverage the upcoming Metrolinx transportation hub and help start the revitalization of the neighbourhood.

The Air Rail Link, a division of Metrolinx will begin stopping in Weston in 2015 en route between downtown Toronto and Pearson International Airport. John Street will be closed to vehicular traffic at the rail crossing and a new pedestrian bridge will be constructed to connect the community across the GO rail corridor. The TAP Panel envisioned John Street west of the track as a potential market district.

In December, 2011, ULI Toronto District Council, in partnership with Metrolinx and the City of Toronto, was selected as part of an international competition for ULI's 75th Anniversary Urban Innovation Fund for their joint submission titled *John Street Revitalization/Streetscape Plan*. The grant of \$23,750, matched by partner organizations, is to inject between \$75,000 and \$85,000 to kick-start urban development and renewal of Weston Village.

The *John Street Revitalization/Streetscape Plan* envisions the transformation of John Street from a secondary commercial street into a vibrant market district. The installation taking place this Friday is a pilot project designed to show the potential of John Street and step towards the revitalization of the neighbourhood.

The complete revitalization plan was designed by DTAH, a Toronto landscape architecture/urban design/architecture firm. A design workshop was held in April of this year where the Weston Village BIA, local residents, and representatives from the City, Metrolinx, and ULI came together.

Other cities where similar temporary streetscape installations have occurred include: New York Times Square installation, San Francisco PARKing Days, Philadelphia and Oklahoma City block by block revitalization through an initiative called 'Better Block'.

Residents are invited to come and experience the magical transformation of John Street to get a taste of what the future might be. On Friday June 15th from 4pm -8pm area residents will meet on John Street to help create a new and vibrant community seating area under a twinkling canopy of lights –in time for the opening of the John St. Farmers' Market and the Best of Weston Multicultural Festival.

For more information, please contact the Weston BIA (admin@westonvillagebia.com) or Councillor Frances Nunziata's office (councillor_nunziata@toronto.ca)

About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute (www.uli.org) is a non-profit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in sustaining and creating thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the Institute has more than 28,000 members representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. In Canada, the Urban Land Institute is an active and growing organization. With over 1,000 members across the country, Canada's first ULI District Council was established in Toronto in 2005 and a second District Council exists in British Columbia. ULI Toronto has over 500 members in Toronto.

The ULI TAP Program is a high profile industry program that brings industry leaders together to collaborate on complex land use and redevelopment projects and allows members of ULI Toronto to be in at the ground floor of the revitalization of their City and provide meaningful contribution.

As part of ULI's 75th Anniversary Urban Innovation Fund program, 30 grants totaling \$500,000 have been awarded to Urban Land Institute district and national councils. ULI contributed funds as grants to local ULI projects that recognize or launch innovative

public-private partnerships that will advance the responsible use of land in building healthy, thriving communities worldwide over the next 75 years.

About the City of Toronto

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.7 million people. Toronto's government is dedicated to delivering customer service excellence, creating a transparent and accountable government, reducing the size and cost of government and building a transportation city. For information on non-emergency City services and programs, Toronto residents, businesses and visitors can dial 311, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

About Metrolinx

Metrolinx is the Province of Ontario's regional transportation agency for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). GO Transit, a division of Metrolinx, is Ontario's inter-regional public transit system linking Toronto with the surrounding regions of the GTHA. GO carries more than 57 million passengers a year in an extensive network of train and bus services that spans over 10,000 square kilometres.

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