

THE BENTWAY 2018/19 ANNUAL REPORT

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that we operate on the treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit and the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, the Métis, and many other Indigenous nations.

Toronto is now home to many diverse Indigenous people. We recognize them as the past, present and future caretakers of this land. We would like to pay our respects to all who have gathered and will continue to gather in this place. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work together to care for The Bentway lands and act as stewards of the space.

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OUR PEOPLE

The first phase of The Bentway is located on lands that are part of Fort York National Historic Site, recognized by the Government of Canada as being of national significance.

OF THE CITY

The Gardiner Expressway is a single-purpose structure built 60 years ago when “car was king”. But Toronto has changed.

The city has blossomed upwards around the highway’s firm divide, bisecting the downtown core; a street-level barrier to our now-flourishing waterfront.



ABOUT THE CITY

Is the Gardiner an obstacle? Or is it an opportunity for Toronto to dream differently?

The Bentway re-imagines the forgotten lands under the Gardiner to explore intersections of art, play, community connectivity, and public space, advancing conversations about the common challenges that cities face across the globe.



FOR THE CITY

What kind of city do we want to build together? How can we create a more connected Toronto?

The Bentway is a shared space where Toronto can rediscover itself: where neighbours meet; where community thrives; where residents and artists co-create.

“ We wanted to take an unloved, unnoticed space and help build it into a ‘people place’ that would inspire new thinking on how our city can come together. The Bentway is a catalyst, an experiment, a promise.

JUDY & WIL MATTHEWS
Co-Founders, *The Bentway*



FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

On a frigid day in January, as skaters' blades graced the ice of The Bentway on its opening day, a group of civic disruptors huddled together and celebrated an important milestone in a momentous journey of city-building.

Only two years before, Judy and Wil Matthews, along with Ken Greenberg, approached Mayor John Tory with a remarkable proposition: a \$25-million donation and an opportunity to transform the neglected land under the Gardiner Expressway into a new central park. Armed with an enchanting site design by PUBLIC WORK, Ken's compelling narrative, and the Matthews' signature friendly tenacity, a public-private partnership set course to change how our city envisions, funds, and creates public space.

The re-imagining under the Gardiner Expressway was catalyzed by Fort York several years earlier through the opening of their iconic Visitor Centre (designed by Patkau Architects). And now, a once redundant industrial void has blossomed into what has been called “a contemporary urban cathedral,” animated by free, year-round, participatory programming.

Our journey is sustained by the ongoing support of Mayor Tory, Councillors Cressy and Layton, the Waterfront Secretariat and other key staff at the City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto. Under the stewardship of Co-Executive Directors Ilana Altman and David Carey, and fuelled by the imagination and aspiration of Torontonians like you, we're trailblazing global urban conversations through a pioneering new lens.

Thank you for continuing to dream with us,

MAZYAR MORTAZAVI
President & CEO, TAS
Board Chair, *The Bentway*



The Bentway has provided Torontonians the opportunity to connect to their community, to each other, and to a rich arts and culture scene. The entire city should be proud of the success we are seeing at The Bentway and the enriching experiences it continues to provide us.

MAYOR JOHN TORY
Bentway Champion



FROM OUR CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



With a vision to “change how people build, connect in, and value urban life,” audacity was never in short supply as The Bentway was imagined into being.

Equally as enduring has been a commitment to creating a shared space driven by partnerships with artists, neighbours, knowledge-keepers, city animators, designers, and fellow urbanists.

A vast number of players have helped The Bentway come to life, including an inventive staff team, an ever-trusting Board of Directors, our friends at Fort York, and a growing family of supporters. We also want to recognize Julian Sleath and Tom McCullough for leading The Bentway through a formative launch period as Founding CEO and Founding Board Chair, respectively.

Here, we celebrate a first year of collective achievements: a flourishing company of 57 creative partners; new site-specific work and site performances by 218 artist alumni; a multitude of free events, performances and workshops; plus engagement with over 250,000 public participants. And all this under Toronto’s busiest and most-debated roadway! We’re off to a good start.

The Bentway is full of surprises. We hope that we can continue to build them together with you.

ILANA ALTMAN & DAVID CAREY
Co-Executive Directors, The Bentway

RADICALLY ACCESSIBLE

OUR SITE HAS NO WALLS AND NO FRONT DOOR. WE'RE A SHARED SPACE OPEN 365 DAYS A YEAR, AND VIRTUALLY ALL OF OUR PROGRAMMING IS FREE TO ATTEND. THE BENTWAY IS YOUR OPEN INVITATION.

With ever-evolving programming, and always new surprises to discover, The Bentway has quickly become a city-wide destination for unique shared experiences. It's both a shared space and a central commons.

COUNCILLOR JOE CRESSY
*City of Toronto, Ward 10
Board Member, The Bentway*



A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD GATHERING SPACE

One Sunday this past summer, community member Norman Di Pasquale and his family were taking in music at The Bentway's summer stage. The leader of one of the bands spotted Norm dancing in the crowd and asked his name. Di Pasquale's enthusiasm was contagious and the band leader started a rallying cry, "Hey everybody, have as much fun as Norm!"

Di Pasquale and his family first visited The Bentway in January 2018 for the opening of The Bentway Skate Trail, which everyone remembers as Toronto's coldest day on record. From the very beginning, Di Pasquale saw The Bentway as a community gathering place and as a way to animate the waterfront and promote connectivity from the city to the lake.

Like many of our local neighbours, the Di Pasquales have become avid visitors to The Bentway. They've participated in free skate and skateboarding lessons, danced to bands at Sunday Social events, coasted around the figure-eight trail, and so much more. Ultimately, Norm comes to have fun: "The events are unique and approachable, and free. It's a place where both daddy and the kids can have fun." Like us, he can't wait for the next adventure at The Bentway.



WHERE ARTS AND RECREATION INTERSECT

Neighbours, urbanists, changemakers, and creatives have long turned to “play” as a tool for city-building. A shared space by design, The Bentway is proud to work at the intersection of art and recreation to bring Toronto together in new and unexpected ways.

Skateboarders commonly rely on covert interactions with the urban fabric, yet endless civic barriers to skateboarding have only fuelled a very real and warm community of daredevils, athletes, and friends. What happens when skateboarders are welcomed into a space and invited to make it their own?

In 2018, we teamed up with Toronto’s passionate skateboarding community – including lead collaborators Build For Bokma alongside Skate Loft, Babes Brigade, Morning Bell Skateboards, The Baitshop, and Vans – to transform The Bentway into a pop-up skatepark for the entire summer.

Together, we created a series of skateable art sculptures on the site that encouraged everyday use and developed an accompanying program of workshops on skateboard skills, videography, screen printing, and design, paired with plenty of skate demos, trick showcases, and open skates.

This project speaks to the simultaneous accessibility and inaccessibility of urban spaces, to the reclamation of the city by countercultures, and to the potential for functional and inclusive city-building through creative collaboration.



Whether it's for skating, a visit to the splashpad, or a can't-miss art installation, we're so lucky to have such a multi-faceted, inclusive space as a backyard. For Liberty Village, CityPlace, and Fort York, The Bentway is ours — and it's pretty magical.

MUNIRA RAVJI
*Realtor & Owner, TOf realestategroup
Board Member, The Bentway*

GENERATIVE SPACE

THE BENTWAY'S UNIQUE CONDITIONS AND POSSIBILITIES INSPIRE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SITE-SPECIFIC ARTISTIC PROJECTS, FROM INTIMATE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE TO TITANIC SCULPTURAL WORK.

I was attracted to The Bentway project by its combination of recycling an otherwise under-used public space, the innovative design creating urban greenery for thousands of families, and the creation of an artists' venue like no other. What could be better! I'm intrigued to see what's next.

ROSAMOND IVEY
*Managing Director, JRS Group
Bentway Donor*



A ROAMING PERFORMANCE, CO-CREATED

When Ilana Altman joined The Bentway team as lead curator, the first collaborator she reached out to was Montreal-based choreographer Noémie Lafrance. Lafrance is best known for her ambitious works in unexpected urban areas, from abandoned public pools to the rooftops of Frank Gehry buildings. Altman knew that Lafrance could transform the challenging particularities of The Bentway – its monumentality, its linearity, its episodic nature – into artistic assets.

Noémie's site-specific creation grew out of a thoughtful series of public workshops, engaging professional dancers together with local residents to collectively explore the space, history, and sounds of The Bentway and adjacent Fort York. Lafrance worked with these collaborators in an iterative way to find the movements and sounds that would make up her final work.

The result? *Dérives*: an ambulatory performance that questioned urban infrastructure as a new form of political power and social design. Nearly two years in development, public presentations included 60 diverse performers (many of whom had no prior dance experience) to guide 1,400 attendees across the entire length of the Granovsky Gluskin Path in a series of choreographed tableaux. As our first major performance piece, *Dérives* proved The Bentway's potential as a canvas, and an instigator, for bold new artistic work.



THE BENTWAY HAS BEEN FORTUNATE TO WORK WITH MORE THAN 200 ARTISTS, INCLUDING:

Amai Kuda et les Bois
Toronto, Canada

Susan Blight
Couchiching First Nation, Anishinaabe

Vanessa Brazeau
Calgary, Canada / Berlin, Germany

Canadian National Brass Project
Canada

Dana Claxton
Hunkpapa Lakota, Sioux

Charlotte Cornfield
Toronto, Canada

Wally Dion
Yellow Quill First Nation, Sauteaux

Sans Façon
Calgary, Canada

Noémie Lafrance
Montreal, Canada

Public Visualization Studio
Toronto, Canada

R.I.S.E.
Scarborough, Canada

Daan Roosegaarde
Rotterdam, Netherlands

The Darcys
Toronto, Canada

Tune Your Ride
Toronto, Canada

Quentin Vercetty
Toronto, Canada



It was a great privilege to be the inaugural Artists-in-Residence at The Bentway this summer. We learned a great deal about sound, architecture, space, and community in this unique site thanks to the generous support of The Bentway team.

MITCHELL AKIYAMA & BRADY PETERS
2019 Artists in Residence, The Bentway



CONNECTED & DISCOVERABLE

DRIVEN BY SUPPORT FROM DONORS, CORPORATE PARTNERS, GOVERNMENTS, AND LOCAL RESIDENTS, THE BENTWAY IS PROUD TO UNITE COMMUNITIES THROUGH SHARED EXPERIENCES OF PLAY, LEARNING, AND SURPRISE.

The Bentway and Fort York have developed a mutually enriching relationship, engaging the community in exploring Toronto's past, present and future. It's wonderful to see both organizations working together, building common ground for our city.

CHERYL BLACKMAN
*Director, Museums & Heritage Services,
City of Toronto*



The Bentway is the most dynamic cultural venue in Toronto! Unlike a traditional art gallery or temporary public art space, it has amazing opportunities for large scale artwork, along with the curatorial and technical support to realize large projects at the highest possible professional quality.

In my case, this was the first time in a 20-year arts practice that it was possible to exhibit one of my urban images in its 100 metre full length, uncut, and uninterrupted. The experience of viewing the installation was unique and memorable. No other arts venue in the city has such amazing opportunities!

MICHAEL AWAD

Artist, *If, But, What If* (2018) at *The Bentway*

THE POWER AND POETRY OF WATER

In October, The Bentway looked back at Toronto's past, and forward to its potential futures, with a presentation of *WATERLICHT* – a dream landscape and virtual flood created through the imaginative use of LEDs, software, and lenses. The installation's larger-than-life, cascading waves of blue light and accompanying soundtrack of personal stories called attention to our site as the former shoreline of Lake Ontario and brought attention to rising water levels in waterfront cities across the globe.

WATERLICHT was conceived by Dutch artist and innovator Daan Roosegaarde, a creative thinker and maker of social designs who is best known for creating landscapes of the future. The piece is a site-responsive exploration of the impact of climate change on water levels and has travelled to Amsterdam, London, Paris, New York, and more. The presentation at The Bentway was its Canadian premiere.

Over a three-night run at The Bentway in front of the Fort York Visitor Centre, *WATERLICHT* created a city-wide moment, with 30,000 attendees and lively conversations on social media, in the press, and among our program partners. *WATERLICHT* was an enchanting light show and a stirring call-to-action for city-wide conversations around clean water initiatives and climate change.

COMMUNITY INCUBATED PROGRAMMING



The Bentway's personality is co-created with residents, artists, environmentalists, and community groups who help ensure that the site remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive.

Our new Community Incubation Program nurtures locally-led projects by providing funding, production support, marketing, and mentorship opportunities to budding city animators.

Participants in the first year of this program included:

Michelle Creates / Manic Media — Musical performances, poetry, and comedy used to tackle the stigma surrounding mental wellness

Caterwaul Theatre — A series of shadow puppet vignettes that explored the historical traces of Toronto's ever-changing shoreline

I/O Movement — An exploratory dance residency featuring five emerging dance artists

Central Talks — Dialogues on civic issues including vertical living, urban health, and inclusive design



AN URBAN DIALOGUE

THE BENTWAY IS PROUD TO ADVOCATE FOR NOVEL APPROACHES TO CITY-BUILDING, ANCHORED BY UNRESTRICTED AND OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT URBANISM.

Over the past 20 years, Concord has transformed a desolate downtown area into a vibrant neighbourhood. We're absolutely delighted to see the like-minded Bentway 'movement' stitching this community together further. Even more exciting is the way they're so successfully and uniquely bringing the site to life.

GABRIEL LEUNG

Vice President of Development, Concord Adex





NEW MONUMENTS FOR NEW CITIES

For our Spring/Summer 2019 season, we teamed up with our friends at the High Line Network, including The High Line in New York City and like-minded partners in Chicago, Austin, and Houston, to create a touring public art exhibition, *New Monuments for New Cities*.

As monuments in public spaces are re-examined—from Confederate statues in the U.S. to the debates about Canadian “hero” John A. Macdonald—who or what will replace them on the empty pedestals in our public squares and plazas?

The exhibition brought together 25 artists, five from each participating city, to answer this timely question with their own proposal for a new contemporary type of monument and civic representation. Featured Toronto-based artists included Susan Blight, Coco Guzman, Life of a Crapehead (Amy Lam and Jon McCurley), An Te Liu, and Quentin VerCetty.

We were thrilled to foster local-international exchange during the show’s run by hosting Toronto’s first Monuments Summit with international guests, an interchange with Ken Lum’s Monument Lab in Philadelphia, and ten public art tours led by local historians, creatives, and curators. This project opened up a dialogue between the artists and their works, activists, civic leaders, and audiences about a pressing, urban issue.



TORONTO IS DREAMING BIG

The Bentway has caught the imagination of the entire city, opening the door to innovative ways of repurposing underutilized spaces. We are bringing parties together across the central waterfront to integrate these as a connective whole along the full length of the Gardiner/Lakeshore corridor.

KEN GREENBERG

*Principal, Greenberg Consultants
Board Member, The Bentway*

Since the beginning, The High Line has strived to make the impossible possible. We see that spirit in The Bentway. After an auspicious first year, we're excited to see how it continues to evolve and thrive.

ROBERT HAMMOND

*Co-Founder & Executive Director,
Friends of the High Line*



AN EVOLVING, CONNECTIVE PRECINCT

At its opening, it was said that “The High Line teaches us that in New York, impossible dreams can come true.” What will The Bentway teach us about Toronto?

The Bentway offers new, hybrid thinking on how we approach infrastructure and develop civic commons. Where many saw eyesores and obstacles, our city saw potential, heart, and hidden magic in the middle of our concrete jungle.

Announced in late 2015 to great fanfare and much curiosity, Judy & Wil Matthews’ founding philanthropic gift was just the beginning. Phase One of The Bentway opened just over two years later in early 2018. Now, we look ahead to a bright future.

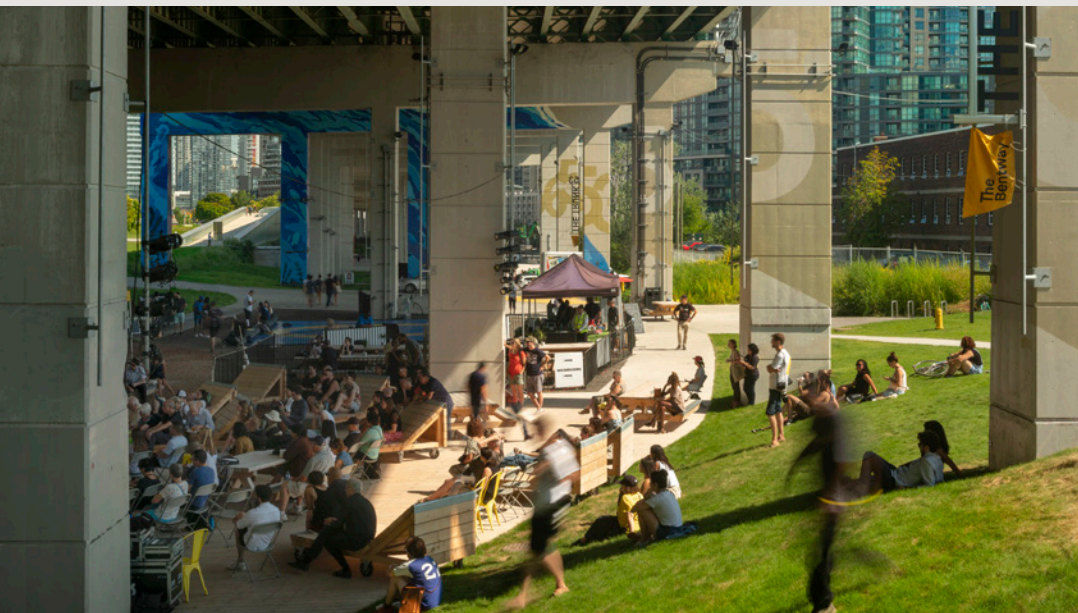
Future phases of growth will continue to build connectivity for residents, visitors, commuters, fans, and cyclists, from Exhibition GO to Spadina Avenue and beyond. A dynamic group of stakeholders, land-owners, communities, and dreamers are working together to develop the “Under Gardiner Corridor” into a new, connective precinct.



OUR FINANCES

| | 2018/19 | 2017/18 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| REVENUE | | |
| Start-up operating funds | \$ 2,019,700 | \$ 2,749,300 |
| Interest earnings | \$ 341,300 | \$ - |
| Government grants | \$ 165,400 | \$ 77,000 |
| Donations | \$ 1,045,800 | \$ 7,000 |
| Corporate partnerships | \$ 235,100 | \$ 26,800 |
| Event rentals and other revenue | \$ 293,300 | \$ 58,700 |
| TOTAL | \$ 4,100,600 | \$ 2,918,800 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Programming | \$ 1,021,300 | \$ 515,500 |
| Visitor experience & facilities | \$ 669,000 | \$ 524,700 |
| Marketing & communications | \$ 452,300 | \$ 98,500 |
| Development | \$ 153,500 | \$ 68,400 |
| Staffing & HR | \$ 1,097,900 | \$ 826,900 |
| Administration | \$ 349,300 | \$ 641,100 |
| Amortization | \$ 106,300 | \$ 74,200 |
| TOTAL | \$ 3,849,600 | \$ 2,749,300 |
| SURPLUS / DEFICIT | \$ 251,000 | \$ 169,500 |

All figures are rounded to the nearest \$100.
Fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30.



42 The Bentway



A GROWING COMPANY OF PARTNERS HELPED DEVELOP OUR YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING, INCLUDING:

- Aga Khan Museum
- Art Gallery of Ontario
- Babes Brigade
- Bicycle Music Festival
- Build for Bokma
- Central Talks
- Chinatown Art Brigade (New York City)
- CONTACT Photography Festival
- Depanneur
- Fort York National Historic Site
- High Line Network (New York City)
- Indigenous Arts Festival
- Manic Media
- Monument Lab (Philadelphia)
- Museum of Toronto
- New Museum (New York City)
- OCAD University
- Outside the March
- Paper Monuments (New Orleans)
- Ryerson Urban Water Institute
- Singing Out
- Swim Drink Fish
- UforChange
- West Toronto Skate Club

THANK YOU TO OUR FAMILY OF SUPPORTERS FOR HELPING US BRING THE BENTWAY TO LIFE.

Founders

Judy & Wil Matthews
Ken Greenberg
Mayor John Tory
City of Toronto
Fort York National Historic Site
PUBLIC WORK
Waterfront Toronto
Artscape

Champions

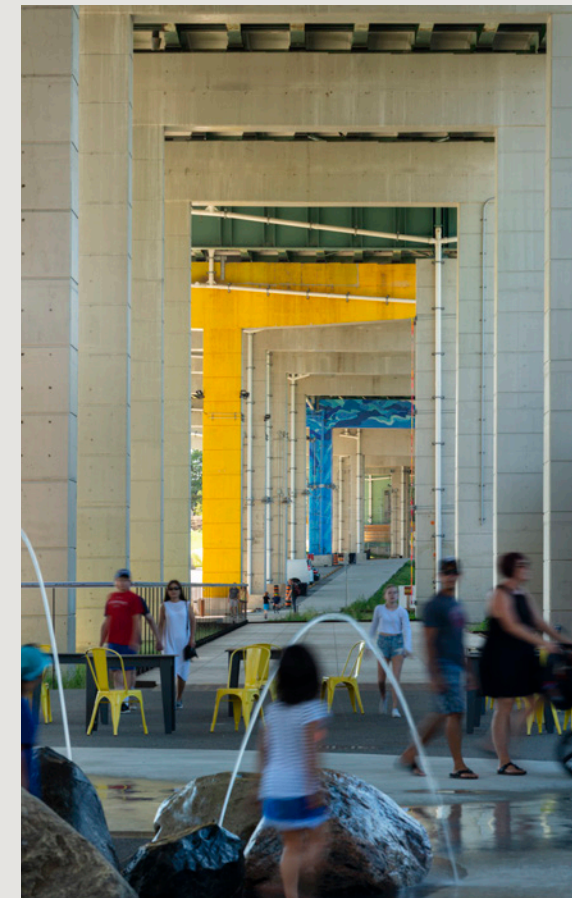
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PortsToronto / Billy Bishop Toronto
City Airport
Consulate General of the Kingdom of
the Netherlands
Department of Canadian Heritage



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Burgundy Asset Management
Beanfield
Bullfrog Power



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President, Delaney Capital Management

Gabe Gonda
Managing Director, Corporate Development,
The Globe and Mail

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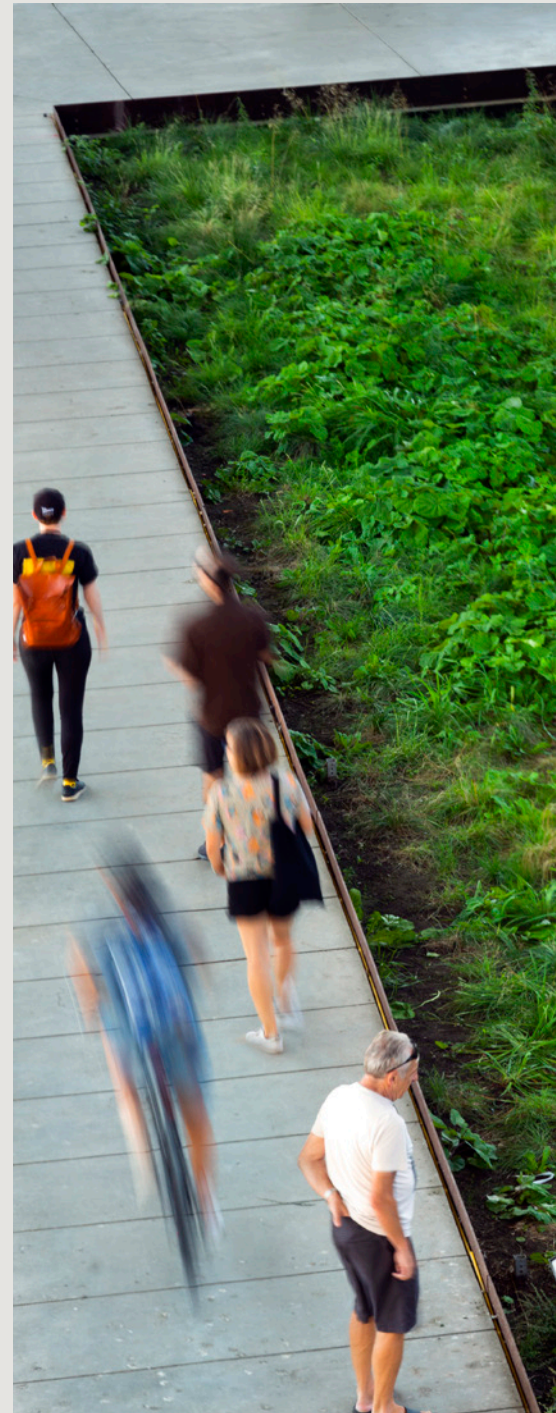
Judy Matthews
Judy and Wilmot Matthews Foundation

Wil Matthews
Judy and Wilmot Matthews Foundation

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City of Toronto, Ward 10

Councillor Mike Layton
City of Toronto, Ward 11

Tom McCullough
Founding Board Chair



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Assistant, Executive & Administration

Stephanie Dudek
Supervisor, Production

Wei Shen Qi
Designer & Coordinator, Marketing

Julian Sleath
Founding CEO (until April 2019)

With enduring thanks to our company of alumni, Urban Rangers, event staff, volunteers, and other friends.



The Bentway is more than just a place. It's a spark and a platform for some of the most critical discussions we need to be having as an inclusive and progressive city. And it's just getting started.

DANIEL SHEARER
President, Cossette

OF THE CITY

ABOUT THE CITY

FOR THE CITY



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