

the bentway

2025–26 Annual Report

towards 7km of impact



We acknowledge that The Bentway is located 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 home to many diverse Indigenous communities, whose relationships with this land continue to this day.

We recognize the histories, presence, and ongoing caretaking of Indigenous peoples on these lands. We honour these relationships and our responsibility to care for the places we share. We are grateful for the opportunity to work together to care for The Bentway lands and act as stewards of the space.

The first phase of The Bentway is located within Fort York National Historic Site, recognized by the Government of Canada for its national significance. We are committed to understanding and respecting the histories of this place as we work together to share its future.

2025–26

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Dear friends and supporters,

The Bentway's 2025–26 year marked an important step in our evolution.

Across the Gardiner corridor, we began to trace a larger idea: that one continuous piece of infrastructure can generate many forms of public value. The work in these pages lays important groundwork for our bold, long-term vision:

**7km of connection,
7km of culture,
7km of possibility.**

A Note from our Board Chair

The Bentway was founded on a bold act of imagination: seeing public opportunity in overlooked places. What began as a transformative vision for the space beneath the Gardiner Expressway has become a civic platform that invites us to experience our city differently and discover new possibilities for public life.

From the Board's vantage point, this work is measured not only by what has been achieved, but by our responsibility to sustain its ambition and help create the conditions for it to thrive, for generations to come. This year reaffirmed the strength of The Bentway's founding idea and the value of the partnerships that continue to carry it forward.

As we reflect on all that has been achieved, I continue to be so inspired by the remarkable drive and creativity of The Bentway's staff; the energy and engagement of our Board of Directors; and the generosity and enthusiasm of our supporters and partners. Their collective commitment, and willingness to champion The Bentway's mission have been invaluable as we unlock new opportunities.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am delighted to recognize Ilana Altman's appointment as Chief Executive Officer in 2025. Since joining The Bentway in 2019, Ilana has been a critical driver of its vision, relationships, and impact. Her creative and collaborative leadership, and her ability to connect bold ideas with civic partnership, have earned her the Board's full confidence as she accelerates The Bentway's growth plan.

The Board is proud to support Ilana and the team as they lead The Bentway, with all of our partners, towards fully realising our shared 7km opportunity in the heart of this beautiful city.

Daniel Shearer
Board Chair



A Note from our CEO

Infrastructure is often judged by a single measure: whether it performs the job it was built to do. But cities change, and the structures within them should be capable of changing too.

At The Bentway, we ask a different question: how can the infrastructure we already have deliver more for the people and communities around it?

Throughout this past year that idea took many forms.

We advanced planning for future Bentway destinations and laid the groundwork for a connected network of public spaces stretching across the city. Artists and designers reimagined the Gardiner as Toronto's largest continuous urban canopy and The Bentway's shaded public realm as an essential civic resource, supporting health, equity, and climate resilience. Along the waterfront, new partnerships demonstrated how culture can connect communities while strengthening our relationship with Lake Ontario. Across every season, thousands of people gathered to skate, create, learn, volunteer, and experience public space in new ways.

Each initiative reflects the same belief: that we can ask our infrastructure to deliver more, supporting movement while also creating the cultural, social, environmental, and economic value that strengthens everyday life.

None of this happens alone. It is made possible by artists, Indigenous partners, community organizations, public agencies, supporters, volunteers, and neighbours who bring their knowledge, creativity, and care to this work.

To our donors and partners: your support gives us the foundation to test what infrastructure can do, build the relationships this work depends on, and carry the vision forward. Thank you for helping shape this next chapter of The Bentway.

Ilana Altman
Chief Executive Officer



a 7km civic spine



scaling a proven model

For nearly a decade, The Bentway has demonstrated what is possible when overlooked infrastructure is reimagined as public space. What began beneath the Gardiner Expressway as a single destination has become a powerful example of how existing infrastructure can be reimagined to deliver many public benefits.

This year marked an important step forward in the Gardiner corridor's larger transformation. Building on City Council's approval of the **Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan**, The Bentway began advancing a long-term vision for 7km of connected public space stretching from Dufferin Street to the Don Valley. This work represents a new way of thinking about the Gardiner corridor—not as a series of disconnected spaces beneath a highway, but as one continuous civic spine connecting neighbourhoods, waterfront destinations, transit, and communities across Toronto.

The vision brings together a network of Bentway destinations, a continuous multi-use trail, welcoming civic gateways, and year-round cultural programming into a coordinated public realm that strengthens mobility, supports climate resilience, expands access to arts and recreation, and creates new opportunities for connection.



Visualization of future connection between The Bentway and Exhibition Place.



building new destinations beneath the expressway

In 2025, **The Bentway Islands**, located at the foot of Canoe Landing Park, reached a significant milestone with the completion of schematic design led by Field Operations and Brook McIlroy. Formal endorsement by Waterfront Toronto's Design Review Panel marked the successful conclusion of this phase, advancing plans for a 125,000-square-foot public destination that will better connect the city to its waterfront, and deliver much needed recreational amenities, ecological landscapes, and year-round cultural programming. As a future sister site to the existing Bentway site, the project will significantly expand the organization's capacity to welcome visitors and animate public space.

To the west, a feasibility study completed in partnership with Exhibition Place confirmed the potential to expand the existing Bentway site westward. The study established a shared vision for transforming the underused spaces into connected public plazas, a multi-use trail linking the future Ontario Line station to downtown, and new spaces for cultural activity and community gathering. The project has since advanced into schematic design, led by PUBLIC WORK.

View of the Arcade Courts at The Bentway Islands, rendered by Field Operations.

connecting the corridor

View of the Spadina Ravine at The Bentway Islands, rendered by Field Operations.



The Bentway's long-term vision depends not only on creating new destinations, but on ensuring they are seamlessly connected. Cohesive trails, gateways, and wayfinding transform a series of individual places into a continuous public experience, making it easier, safer, and more inviting for people to move through the city on foot or by bike while discovering new neighbourhoods and attractions along the way.

Over the past year, The Bentway advanced key initiatives that will establish the physical framework for a connected civic corridor beneath and alongside the Gardiner Expressway.

Multi-Use Trail

One of the defining features of the Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan is a continuous multi-use trail linking neighbourhoods, parks, transit, and waterfront destinations across the 7km corridor. This year, The Bentway launched a comprehensive trail study in partnership with the City of Toronto and appointed BA Group, Fathom Studio, and O2 Planning + Design to examine existing conditions across the corridor and identify opportunities to improve safety, comfort, accessibility, and continuity for pedestrians and cyclists. The study will deliver a corridor-wide design framework and implementation strategy, providing the foundation for future development and ensuring that each new phase contributes to one connected, cohesive public realm.

Gardiner Gateways

The intersections beneath the Gardiner Expressway are among the most challenging public spaces in Toronto. Designed primarily to move vehicles, they often present difficult conditions for people walking and cycling, despite serving as critical gateways to Toronto's waterfront.

To reimagine these important thresholds, The Bentway partnered with the FIFA World Cup 2026™ Toronto Secretariat, the Waterfront BIA, CityPlace Fort York BIA, the City of Toronto, local developers and businesses, and Oslo-based lighting designers Light Bureau to develop a new gateway standard. Working in close coordination with the City's Transportation Services Division and Waterfront Secretariat, the initiative advanced pilot projects at Dan Leckie Way and Bathurst Street, demonstrating how lighting, wayfinding, and thoughtful public realm design can improve safety, comfort, and the pedestrian experience while aligning with the ongoing rehabilitation of the Gardiner.

Together, these projects exemplify the type of change that is possible when public and private sector partners come together to invest in a shared vision, and establish a replicable approach. These pilots set a new standard for the full 7km corridor, transforming overlooked intersections into welcoming civic thresholds.



“

As CityPlace and Fort York continues to grow, strong connections to the waterfront are essential. This project reflects our Streetscape Master Plan's priorities: enhancing safety, supporting placemaking, and creating more vibrant, connected streets. It also helps transform the spaces beneath the Gardiner into a more welcoming and accessible public realm.

”

Mary Fragedakis, Executive Director, CityPlace and Fort York BIA

“

The Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan is ambitious, and delivering it successfully depends on strong partnerships on both sides of the highway that runs between us. The Waterfront BIA and The Bentway have worked closely together to turn a shared vision into tangible improvements, building on the Waterfront ReConnect projects alongside multiple BIA, development, residential, and institutional partners who share an interest in making these underpasses more welcoming, connected, and memorable for the people who use them every day.

”

Oliver Hierlihy, Operations Director, Waterfront BIA

Gardiner Wallworks

In 2025, The Bentway launched Gardiner Wallworks, a new rotating mural program developed in partnership with Exhibition Place. Transforming a 10,000-square-foot wall beneath the Gardiner Expressway into a platform for contemporary public art, the initiative marks the first visible expression of The Bentway’s future westward expansion.

For the inaugural commission, Montreal-based artist Rebecca Munce created *Petal and Stone*, a monumental mural inspired by native plant species, the historic architecture of Exhibition Place, the Gardiner, and the ornamental passageways that connect people to nature, infrastructure, and the surrounding city. Working with Ashop Productions, Munce translated these influences into a vibrant work at an unprecedented scale.

Positioned alongside the future Ontario Line pedestrian corridor, *Petal and Stone* is visible to thousands of daily commuters while signaling a new chapter for the spaces under the Gardiner, west of Strachan Avenue. The project demonstrates how culture can begin shaping the identity of a place long before construction is complete, building curiosity, connection, and a shared sense of possibility for what comes next.





seeing infrastructure differently

The Bentway was founded on the belief that infrastructure can be a place of creativity, connection, and shared public life. Arts and culture have always been central to that vision, inviting people to experience familiar spaces in unexpected ways and opening new conversations about the future of our cities.

As The Bentway's physical footprint expands, so too does its cultural reach. This year, artists, designers, researchers and communities transformed the Gardiner corridor into a platform for exploring climate, ecology, identity, and belonging. Their work demonstrates that culture doesn't simply animate public space, it helps shape how we understand the future of our cities.



Sun/Shade

How can public space help cities adapt to a changing climate?



Pictured above: *la sombra que te cobija / the shadow that shelters you* by Edra Soto.

As temperatures continue to rise and extreme heat becomes more common in Toronto, The Bentway's Summer 2025 season of public art and programming, *Sun/Shade*, placed Toronto at the forefront of an urgent international conversation about shade's role as a critical public resource. Centered beneath the Gardiner Expressway—Toronto's largest continuous urban canopy—the exhibition and events brought together artists, designers, policy leaders and researchers from Toronto and beyond to examine how public space can be at the forefront of our response to a changing climate.

Through installations, performances, and community programming, *Sun/Shade* invited visitors to experience shade not just as an amenity, but as essential civic infrastructure, shaping healthier, more comfortable and adaptable cities. The exhibition illustrated ways to deploy the sun and shade as creative tools, revealing how new thinking about familiar resources can improve urban life.

8

public art commissions

50

shade-providing trees planted

220K

participants

40M

media impressions

30

creatives and artists engaged



Moving Forest

A flock of 50 trees in shopping carts playfully travelled through the city, creating temporary shade canopies in sun-exposed spaces. Over an eight-week journey from The Bentway to YZD at Downsview and the Waterfront, this project by NL Architects (Amsterdam, NL) activated public space through shade making, pop-up readings, performances, and site-specific interventions.

Along the way, volunteers became active contributors to a greener city, lending their time and energy to the trees' care and movement. The mobile urban trees sparked conversations in each neighbourhood they visited and demonstrated a strong public appetite for climate solutions rooted in equity and participation.

Presented in partnership with YZD, with support from Harbourfront Centre

Sand Flight

The world premiere of *Sand Flight*, by choreographer Ingri Fiksdal and theatre director Jonas Corell Petersen (Oslo, NO), brought eight international and local dancers and a 50-person local choir to a massive sand dune beneath the Gardiner Expressway.

Nominated for two Dora Mavor Moore Awards, this powerful site-specific performance envisioned a future climate where extreme heat leads desert sands to migrate beneath the Expressway. In this transformed landscape, the work explores new cultural traditions centred on shade, collective gathering, and adaptation.

Presented in partnership with Toronto Dance Theatre

Seeing Celsius

By adding thermal-imaging technology to the familiar viewfinder found at scenic lookout points, LeuWebb Projects (Toronto, CA) enabled visitors to see temperature differences across The Bentway and the bodies moving through it.

The installation made heat, an often-invisible condition, immediately visible, offering visitors a new way to understand how materials, design, and movement shape our experience of and comfort in public space.





Declaration of the Understory

Mixed Secwépemc and settler artist Tania Willard (Secwépemc, CA) approached the space beneath the highway as a forest canopy, reminiscent of the “understory” layer of southern Ontario forests, where pockets of shade and sunlight shape distinct ecosystems. In a mixed-media installation, new plantings, floral motifs, iridescence, and powerful slogans offered a meditation on shade as a life-giving force.



la sombra que te cobija / the shadow that shelters you

A geometric pavilion invited visitors beneath the Gardiner, casting cooling shade and patterned light. Edra Soto's (Chicago, USA) installation referenced the shade-making facades of working-class Puerto Rican bungalows, creating a sun-filtering threshold that reflected on heat-responsive architecture, place-making, and cultural heritage.

Casting a Net, Casting a Spell SOLAR

Artist duo Celeste (Mexico City, MX) extended the benefits of the Gardiner deck by creating a majestic, quilted canopy that cast shade over a communal seating area, offering relief from heat and space for gathering. Like a suncatcher, the installation engaged with solar imagery and archetypes that have surrounded the sun since antiquity.

To conclude the *Sun/Shade* exhibition, The Bentway presented *SOLAR* by Quayola (Rome, IT), a large-scale light installation that explored the shifting moments between day and night.

In this immersive work, a robotic arm translated the sun's daily arc into algorithmic gestures and moving beams of light, sweeping across the night sky to orchestrate hundreds of synchronized projections in a dynamic choreography of light and shadow. Presented beneath the Gardiner Expressway—where shade is constant—*SOLAR* simulated a sunset unfolding in real time.

Co-commissioned with Videocittà Festival





**Detail from *Casting a Net,*
*Casting a Spell.***

Sun/Shade: lasting impact

The learnings from the *Sun/Shade* season extended beyond the exhibition itself. Public conversations, research partnerships, design initiatives, and educational programming connected artistic exploration with practical questions about climate adaptation, demonstrating how cultural programming can contribute to lasting civic dialogue and inform the future of public space.



Cool Spots

Alongside the *Sun/Shade* season of programming, The Bentway created a *Cool Spots* mapping tool that invited Torontonians to share spaces across the city that make the heat of the summer more comfortable and livable. From parks and splash pads to overpasses and laneways, community-submitted locations were gathered into a crowdsourced public resource celebrating local knowledge and everyday experiences of the city.

Cool by Design

Cool by Design: The Power of Shade in Public Space translated the questions raised by our 2025 *Sun/Shade* season into actionable research and practical tools for designers, policymakers, and communities.

Developed in collaboration with artists, designers, researchers, and policymakers—and building on the **City of Toronto's Thermal Comfort Guidelines**—this publicly available resource explores how public spaces and their programming help cities respond to heat, reframing cool public spaces as vital public health elements and social infrastructure.

Launch event for *Cool by Design*, co-presented by The Bentway and DIALOG.



Visitors enjoying the skate trail.

“

Cool by Design makes a deceptively simple point: shade is not a decorative afterthought, but part of the infrastructure of public life. By bringing together design, research and lived experience, it asks a more useful question of public space: how does it feel, who can use it, and for how long? Rooted in Toronto but relevant far beyond it, the publication helps move shade from the margins of design conversations to the centre of how we create cities that remain generous, equitable and usable in a warming climate.

”

Dorsa Jalalian, Associate and Senior Designer, DIALOG



public space powered by partnership

A view from A Lake Story.

The Bentway's impact extends beyond the spaces it creates. As the organization grows, so too does its ability to bring together artists, community organizations, businesses and public agencies to explore some of the city's most pressing questions.

This collaborative approach recognizes that complex urban challenges cannot be addressed by a single discipline or institution. They require new ways of working together.



People gather to watch *A Lake Story*.

A Lake Story



10K

attendees across
four performances

400

volunteers mobilized

240+

paddles and life jackets
redistributed to the community

39.2M

media impressions

44

community supporters
and community groups

One example of The Bentway's commitment to partnership is *A Lake Story*, a major public art commission by artist Melissa McGill (New York, USA) and the anchor project of the inaugural Water/Fall Festival. The project invited Torontonians to engage with Lake Ontario as a shared space of creativity, community, and civic identity. In doing so, it reflected a vision that continues to shape The Bentway's growth: connecting people to public space, to one another, and to the landscapes that define Toronto.

Developed in collaboration with local artists such as Jason Logan of the Toronto Ink Company, ecologists from the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority, and Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, Elder Dr. Duke Redbird, the project transformed materials gathered along Toronto's shoreline into vibrant natural inks used to hand-paint a series of silk banners. The creative process

itself became an act of collaboration, bringing together diverse perspectives and ways of knowing to tell a richer story of the lake.

More than 100 canoes and 400 community participants joined a procession across Toronto Harbour between Biidaasige Park and Sugar Beach, creating a powerful shared experience on the water. Beyond the event itself, *A Lake Story* united cultural institutions, educational partners, environmental organizations, local businesses, and community groups from across the waterfront. By forging relationships across sectors and across the harbour, *A Lake Story* demonstrated how culture can connect communities, strengthen partnerships, and expand The Bentway's role as a city-building organization.

“A *Lake Story* was an unprecedented, collective act of interconnectedness—a shared moment connecting communities directly to the water’s living presence. Gathering 400+ paddlers in procession, we mapped Toronto’s watershed and biosphere, giving it a colour and vocabulary of its own. The result amplified the lake’s own language, celebrating its resilience—above the surface, and below.”

Melissa McGill, Artist



“Taking part in *A Lake Story* was an unforgettable experience. Seeing more than 400 paddlers come together on Toronto’s waterfront demonstrated the importance of public art and programming in bringing people together to create meaningful connections. Experiencing The Bentway’s impact firsthand inspired us to become donors, and we are proud to support an organization that is expanding this vision across the full length of the Gardiner corridor and creating more opportunities for people to connect with one another and with our city.”

Mark & Catherine Graham, Volunteer Paddlers & Donors



“It was a great experience and honour to work with Melissa McGill. Her artistry and ability to capture the myriad colours of nature, on every level, during our collaboration filled me with poetic inspiration and appreciation. *A Lake Story* is one that needed to be told by Melissa who has a personal relationship and empathy with nature, and ability to express it. Melissa was instrumental in inspiring my poem called *The Lake Story*. In all, *A Lake Story* was a glorious experience. The production and organization and management by The Bentway was outstanding. We loved our involvement.”

Elder Dr. Duke Redbird



“An epic undertaking like *A Lake Story* could only happen because so many people chose to move in the same direction at once, in partnership—from Melissa McGill and her vision, to 400 paddlers, and the immense support of our Waterfront partners and collaborators, all in service of one collective image on the water. At this scale, public art becomes a shared act of trust across a city, and a powerful moment of connection.”

Alex Rand, Creative Producer, Major Projects, The Bentway

“Since its opening, Biidaasige Park, Toronto’s newest island and biggest park in a generation, has begun fulfilling its promise to reconnect the city to the lake. *A Lake Story* reflected the spirit of this transformation, bringing together art, nature, and community in a vibrant celebration of our waterfront. Waterfront Toronto was proud to support this landmark event as part of our commitment to public art and placemaking. With all its beauty and wonder, the project existed in harmony with Lake Ontario, inviting discovery, adventure, and a renewed connection to the water.”

George Zergarac, President and CEO, Waterfront Toronto



climate action through partnership

Addressing climate change requires collaboration. Across its public realm projects, cultural programming, and operations, The Bentway brings together researchers, designers, artists, public agencies, philanthropists, and community organizations to explore how existing infrastructure can do more for both people and the planet.

Our partners invest not simply in individual projects, but in a long-term vision for a healthier, more resilient Toronto.

“

RBC Foundation is proud to collaborate with The Bentway to advance climate solutions for a greener, more sustainable city. Through their innovative approach to nature-based solutions and environmental sustainability in some of Toronto’s densest urban areas, The Bentway is demonstrating how public spaces can support a more resilient, net-zero future while strengthening communities for generations to come.

”

Adrienne Lo, Director, Environmental Impact, RBC Foundation



Volunteers for *Moving Forest*.

sustainability as a civic practice



Across our operations, exhibitions, and seasonal programming, The Bentway is committed to reducing waste, extending the life of materials, and ensuring project resources continue to serve communities long after visitors have gone home.

Through thoughtful planning and responsible decommissioning, more than **80%** of the materials used in our public art projects from the *Sun/Shade* exhibition were, rented, reused, recycled, or donated rather than sent to landfill. **70%** of fabricated materials were sourced and produced within Ontario, reducing transportation emissions while supporting local fabricators.

These choices give public projects a meaningful afterlife—creating ongoing value for artists, community organizations, educational institutions, and environmental initiatives across Canada.



In 2026 the Bentway's sites continued to perform double-duty as civic and environmental infrastructure on Toronto's waterfront. Following a rare, decade-in site inspection of the significant Bentway bioswales on site, it was confirmed that the system continues to effectively reduce the impacts of polluted run-off on Toronto's water-table more than 10 years after installation.

At the Bentway Staging Grounds site, the stormwater mitigation planters retained an average of **95% of incoming stormwater** during small and moderate rainfall events. They effectively filtered key pollutants associated with roadway runoff, achieving reductions of **80% in suspended solids, 65% in turbidity, and 88% in oil and grease.**

We're grateful to have worked with incredible community partners to give materials a meaningful second life, helping divert usable resources back into the community rather than to landfill.

Thank you to: Black Youth Farming Collective, Ontario Shores Foundation for Mental Health, Habitat for Humanity, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, OCAD, Artist Material Fund.



expanding
civic
participation

Transforming infrastructure is only the beginning. Its greatest impact is realized when people make these spaces their own. Through recreation, creative learning, and year-round programming, The Bentway expands opportunities for people of all ages to participate in civic life. Whether exploring urban ecology, skating beneath the Gardiner, or reimagining neighbourhoods through the Bentway After School program, participants are invited to experience public space not simply as visitors, but as active contributors to the life of the city.



the next generation of city builders

The Bentway believes everyone should have the opportunity to shape the future of their city—and that begins with young people.

In 2025, The Bentway expanded its youth education work with the launch of **Bentway After School**, a multi-week program developed in partnership with Maximum City. Designed for youth ages 9–14, the program combined neighbourhood investigations, storytelling, urban design activities, and recreation to help participants understand how cities are shaped—and how they can help shape them.

That commitment to civic learning extended through The Bentway's school visits program, which welcomed classrooms from

across the GTA to explore adaptive reuse, urban ecology, and public space beneath the Gardiner. Through guided tours and hands-on activities, students experienced how infrastructure can be transformed into places for culture, recreation, and community life while imagining new possibilities for the city around them.

Together, these initiatives are helping a new generation see themselves not simply as passive users of public space, but as active participants in Toronto's future.



learning together

“

I've participated in multiple events this summer: moving forest, art socials and the thermal art workshop. I love the programming and look forward to doing more.

”

Warm Words from Visitors



Public space is a powerful place for learning. Throughout the year, artists and environmental partners invited Torontonians to engage with the ideas explored through The Bentway's programming as active participants.

Inspired by *Sun/Shade*, artists Natalie King and Christina Battle led free public workshops that transformed climate conversations into creative action. Participants experimented with heat-reactive art techniques inspired by *Seeing Celsius* and explored the role of native plant species through handmade seed packet bundles connected to *Declaration of the Understory*.



The Bentway also partnered with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to deliver free **Eco Workshops**, where families and nature enthusiasts explored experimental gardens at the Bentway Staging Grounds site and the emerging ecosystems along the Gardiner corridor. Free and low-cost programs helped remove barriers to participation. Together, these experiences encouraged participants to discover how art, ecology, and public space can contribute to more resilient cities.

a year-round tradition

“

It's absolutely vital to the city to have spaces like The Bentway. So many people were enjoying the space. I wouldn't have cycled along the lakeshore and then did an hour of roller skating if it wasn't for The Bentway today.

”

Warm Words from Visitors



The Bentway Skate Trail has become one of Toronto's most beloved destinations for year-round recreation.

During the winter season, more than **50,000** residents and visitors gathered on the iconic 220-metre figure-eight natural ice trail, reaffirming its place as a cherished winter tradition. Strong participation extended the skating season into early March, creating more opportunities for residents, schools, and community organizations to gather and get active outdoors.

When the ice melted, the trail transformed once again. Roller skating rentals, new low-cost lessons, and monthly community skate parties animated the space with movement, music, and creative expression.

Co-hosted with The Melanin Skate Crew and Beats + Skates, skating parties featured local DJs, live painting, skate demonstrations, and the Toronto Queer Market, creating an inclusive gathering place that celebrated recreation, creativity, and community.

Together, these seasonal experiences demonstrate how thoughtfully designed public infrastructure can support recreation, connection, and belonging throughout the year.



building the next chapter



“

Hatch is proud to support The Bentway’s vision for a more connected and accessible city. Vibrant public spaces strengthen communities, and we’re pleased to help bring ambitious, inclusive experiences to life for people across Toronto.

”

Pierre Olivier, Regional Managing Director, Hatch

Every moment of impact described throughout this report—every gathering, artwork, skating season, design initiative, and community program at The Bentway is strengthened by the people and partners who choose to invest in it. The Bentway’s full potential is realized through the public-private partnerships it enables, including philanthropic, corporate, government, and community support. We are deeply grateful to the supporters who help make this work possible.

This past year, we were lucky to welcome both returning and new funders to The Bentway community, helping to champion both our creative programming and growth work, and helping us to realize the full potential of the under-Gardiner corridor.

As we look ahead, we invite you to become a part of The Bentway journey and help fuel our vision—7km of connected, cultural, sustainable public spaces for a better Toronto.

This year, we were proud to welcome **Hatch** to The Bentway community of supporters. Their generous support helps make possible a year-round program of free arts, culture, recreation, and community experiences that bring people together in public space.



convening the corridor

“

The GCA is the virtual kitchen table around which ideas, enthusiasm, and excitement for our city and all its possibilities emerge.

”

Eileen Costello, Partner, Aird & Berlis



GCA event at Limberlost Place.

As investment and transformation continue along Toronto’s Gardiner Expressway, The Bentway is creating opportunities for the people shaping its future to learn from one another.

In 2025, we launched the **Gardiner Corridor Alliance (GCA)**, bringing together developers, designers, planners, public agencies, and civic leaders working across one of the city’s most significant urban corridors. The Alliance provides a trusted forum for sharing knowledge, building relationships, and developing a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges shaping the Gardiner today and into the future.

By fostering collaboration across sectors, the Alliance strengthens The Bentway’s role not only as a steward of public space, but as a convener of the conversations guiding Toronto’s next generation of city-building.

Learn more about the GCA and how you can join at thebentway.ca/support/gardiner-corridor-alliance.

Gardiner Corridor Alliance (2025)

Recognizing Gardiner Corridor Alliance members with active memberships during The Bentway’s 2025-26 fiscal year.

Presenting Partner	Affiliates		
Choice Properties	Arcadis	Concord Adex	Rockport Group
	BA Group	KPMB Architects	Spanier Group
Supporters	BDP Quadrangle	Krcmar Surveyors	Tercot Communities
Aird & Berlis LLP	Bousfields Inc.	O2 Planning + Design	Two Row Architect
EllisDon Civil Ltd.	Brook McIlroy	Oxford Properties	Waterfront BIA
Wallman Architects	CityPlace Fort York BIA	PUBLIC WORK	WW+P Architects
	3C Lakeshore Inc.	Q Tower	
	Colliers Project Leaders	RAW Design	

our supporters

A big Bentway-sized thank you to all those who helped our work thrive in 2025-26.

Founders

Artscape
City of Toronto
Judy & Wil Matthews
Ken Greenberg
Mayor John Tory
PUBLIC WORK
The Bentway board, staff & volunteers
Waterfront Toronto

Corporate & Community Partners

Apex Sound & Light	Power Corporation of Canada
Batiste Dry Shampoo	Redpath Sugar
Beanfield	Ren's Pets
Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (Toronto Port Authority and Nieuport Aviation)	Salus Marine
Burgundy Asset Management	TAS
Choice Properties	TD Bank Group
Christie Lites	Toronto Dance Theatre
CityPlace Fort York BIA	Waterfront BIA
Connect 6ix	Waterfront Toronto
Design + Technology Lab at The Creative School – Toronto Metropolitan University	WW+P Architects
Exhibition Place	YZD
Hatch	
Hero Patches	
Hotel X	
Indigenous Curatorial Collective	
Investly	
Light + Dark	
Metrolinx	
Nova Craft Canoe	
Oxford Properties	

Government Partners

City of Toronto
Ontario Arts Council
Government of Ontario
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Canada Council for the Arts
Government of Canada
Office of Contemporary Art Norway
Royal Norweigan Embassy

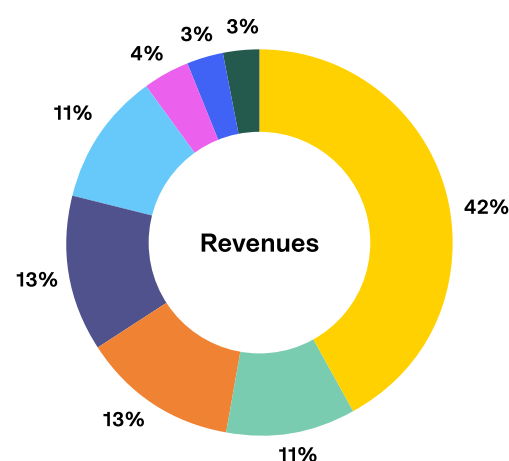
Donors & Foundations

Airlie Foundation	RBC Foundation
Ann Bowman	Sarah Van Exan - In Memory of Andrew Arntfield
Arrell Family Foundation	Save Your Skin Foundation
Balsam Foundation	Sebastian Greenall and Diana Cortes
Chisholm Thomson Family Foundation	TELUS Friendly Future Foundation
Daniel and Stephanie Winberg	Tom MacMillan
Dattels Family Foundation	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
David Cornfield Melanoma Fund	Toronto Foundation
Donald K. Johnson, O.C.	Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts
Evergreen	Trans Canada Trail
George Brown College	University of Toronto - School of Cities
Harbourfront Centre	Waltons Trust
Holly Cornies	Zelick and Joanne Altman
Jaiveer Singh	
Jane Pepino	
Kopas Family Foundation	
Lori Davison	
Mark and Catherine Graham	
Mark Keil	
Liza Mauer and Andrew Sheiner	
McLean Foundation	
Raja Khanna (FortyTwo Communities)	



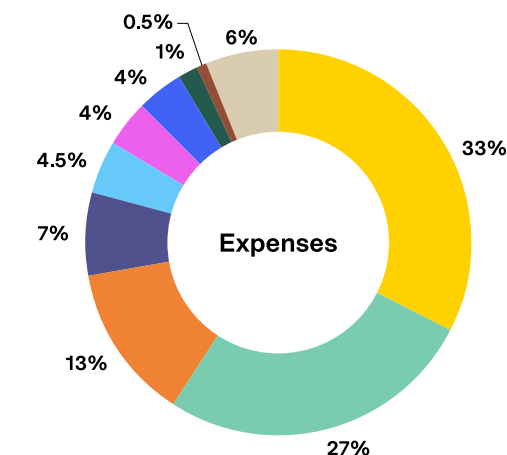
investing
in 7km of
impact

our financials



In 2025–26, The Bentway invested more in the public spaces, programs, people, and partnerships that bring the Gardiner corridor to life today while laying the groundwork for its future.

Programming supported public art commissions, workshops, recreation, youth learning, and major civic experiences including *A Lake Story* and the launch of Bentway After School. Operations kept our spaces open, welcoming, and active year-round through site maintenance, event rentals, winter skating, and summer roller skating. Planning and design advanced the Bentway Islands, trail connections, and



lighting and wayfinding improvements at key under-Gardiner intersections. The Bentway also prepared for expanded civic delivery, including its role as a host site for FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto.

Together, these important investments create places where people can gather, move, learn, and connect, extending that public benefit across the corridor.

How Our Work Was Funded

Revenues	2025/26
Donations	\$2,470,190
Corporate Sponsorships	\$631,296
Government-funded delivery agreements	\$791,587
Government Grants	\$787,756
Retail sales and event rentals	\$659,503
In-kind revenue	\$216,375
Other income	\$203,826
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	\$192,915
Total	\$5,953,448

How We Invested Our Resources

Expenses	2025/26
Human resources*	\$1,943,296
Programming	\$1,576,437
Planning and design	\$783,754
Administrative	\$384,143
Operations	\$260,769
Marketing and communications	\$216,219
Development	\$51,214
Third-party event costs	\$26,566
In-kind expenses	\$216,375
Amortization	\$339,037
Total	\$5,797,810

*People and Expertise

The Human Resources category reflects The Bentway's multidisciplinary team working across sites, seasons, programs, and partnerships. Their expertise supports artists and communities, produces free and low-cost public experiences, operates and cares for complex public spaces, advances design, and builds the relationships that turn individual projects into lasting impact across the corridor.

2025–26 fiscal year running April 1 to March 31.

help shape what comes next

The Bentway is a registered charity. Our work is powered by individuals, foundations, corporate partners and sponsors, government investment, and earned revenue, each playing a distinct role.

Donors and foundations provide flexible and project-based support. Corporate partners and sponsors help bring public art, recreation, seasonal programming, and civic experiences to life, creating meaningful ways to engage audiences on site and across the city.

We are actively fundraising to complete the next phase of design and unlock a new generation of Bentway sites. Continued gifts, grants, sponsorships, and partnerships are equally vital to sustaining the connectivity, art, recreation, learning, and public spaces people experience today.

Whether supporting an artist, a season, a community program, a public-realm improvement, or a future destination, your investment today helps unlock extraordinary public space.

Volunteers for Moving Forest.





our team

The Bentway staff at our
Howl'oween event.

board members

Current Members

Daniel Shearer (Board Chair)
Chief Marketing Officer, Maple

Drew Sinclair (Chair, Capital Projects Committee)
Managing Director, Drew Sinclair Inc.

Raja Khanna (Chair, Governance & Nominating Committee)
Executive Chair & Co-Founder, Dark Slope

Rita Said (Chair, Finance & Audit Committee)
District Vice President, Scotiabank

Ann Bowman
Chair, National Gallery of Canada Foundation

Barbara Macdonald
Founder, Barbara Macdonald Interior Design

Daniel Winberg
Chief Operating Officer, Rockport Group

Eileen Costello
Partner, Aird & Berlis Municipal & Land Use Planning Group

Gabe Gonda
Managing Director, Strategy and Communications, Teneo

Jaiveer Singh
Chief Executive Officer, Mint Pharmaceuticals

Jen Grant
Lawyer, Entrepreneur, and Founding Partner, DaiLo

Lori Davison
Chief Strategy Officer, Diamond

Pierre Olivier
Regional Managing Director, Hatch

Emeritus Members

Judy Matthews
Judy and Wilmot Matthews Foundation

Ken Greenberg
Principal, Greenberg Consultants

Wil Matthews
Judy and Wilmot Matthews Foundation

Recent Board Alumni

Jane Pepino
Partner, Aird & Berlis Municipal & Land Use Planning Group

Board Committees

Capital Projects Committee and Neighbourhood Development Committee

Barbara Macdonald

Chet Shah

Drew Sinclair

Eileen Costello

John Livey

Judy Matthews

Ken Greenberg

Steven Trumper

Finance and Audit Committee

Mark Keil

Preeti Patel

Rita Said

Tom MacMillan

Wil Matthews

our staff

Ilana Altman
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Alex Rand
Creative Producer, Major Projects

Josh Harskamp
Director, Planning & Design

Recent Staff Alumni

Alice Moores-Rodgers
Senior Associate, Fundraising & Partnerships

Kris Dearlove
Urban Ranger

Alison Uttley

Annie DeCoteau Vogelsang

Anna Gallagher-Ross
Director, Programming

Liana Shaw
Manager, Marketing & Communications

Benjamin Freedman

Christiana Webster

Cara Williams
Director, Development & Partnerships

Laurie Brovold
Senior Manager, Finance

David Carey

Cezzane Ilagan
Project Lead, Planning & Design

Renee Castonguay
Manager, Programming & Engagement

Jeremy Vandermeij

Kate Wivell

Danielle Greer
Producer

Roger Kao
Manager, Facilities

Lara Samuel

Dylan Jackson
Urban Ranger

Stephan Lamoureux
Supervisor, Facilities

Masuda Mahazabin

Megan Kammerer

Federico Cortés
Manager, Events

Stephanie Dudek
Director, Operations & Events

Michael Clarke

Gwyneth Dalzell
Supervisor, Operations & Events

Tessa Chan
Director, Finance & HR

Robert McKaye

Jaime Meier
Manager, Office Administration & HR

Tyler J. Sloane
Associate, Marketing & Communications

Jeremy Forsyth
Manager, Production

Jessie Farewell
Manager, Fundraising and Partnerships

appendix

additional resources

Thermal Comfort Guidelines

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/thermal-comfort-study/>

Cool by Design: The Power of Shade in Public Space

<https://thebentway.ca/publication/cool-by-design/>

Sun/Shade in Globe and Mail

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/article-bentway-sun-shade-exhibition/>

Sun/Shade in Azure

<https://www.azuremagazine.com/article/the-bentways-lessons-for-basking-in-the-shade-for-toronto-and-beyond/>

Sun/Shade in Canadian Architect

<https://www.canadianarchitect.com/sun-and-shade-take-centre-stage-with-the-bentways-immersive-summer-program/>

Sand Flight in CBC Arts

<https://www.cbc.ca/arts/set-500-years-in-the-future-this-outdoor-performance-turns-toronto-into-an-apocalyptic-desert-1.7558090>

Moving Forest on Design Lines

<https://www.designlinesmagazine.com/moving-forest/>

A Lake Story Documentary

<https://youtu.be/ZeuH0UoZvxc/>

Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan

https://undergardinerprp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Under-Gardiner-PRP-Vision-and-Opportunities-Report_2024.pdf

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Corey Kelly

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Field Operations

Inside cover, 12, 15

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Mila Bright Zlatanovic

Inside cover, 16, 18-19, 23, 27, 28, 34, 35, 39, 46-47, 48-49, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57, 61, 67, 72-73

Nic Lehoux

Cover, inside cover, 4, 8-9, 20-21, 46, 58-59

Norm Li

Inside cover, 11

PUBLIC WORK

Inside cover

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Sarah Holman

26, 44, 58-59, 70-71

Samuel Engelking

24-25, 28, 29, 30-31, 54

Taku Kumabe

36-37

The Bentway Conservancy

55 Fort York Blvd
Toronto ON M5V 0R6

hello@thebentway.ca
+1 416 304 0222

the bentway