

## Asphalt Parking Lot Transformed into Striking New Waterfront Landmark

July 1, 2013 – In a special Canada Day ceremony, Waterfront Toronto, Harbourfront Centre and the Government of Canada, officially opened Canada Square, a new landmark in the heart of Toronto's waterfront. In the spirit of great European plazas, Canada Square offers a new place for people to gather and enjoy beautifully framed views of Lake Ontario and Toronto's skyline under a canopy of majestic redwood trees.

The new Canada Square marks the completion of a multi-phased project that has transformed about a third of Harbourfront Centre's 10 acre site into an even more vibrant waterfront destination. Central to the project was the construction of a new 300-stall underground parking garage at Harbourfront Centre which opened last summer. By moving the parking lot underground, the surface area was opened up for the creation of new public space.

"Canada Square demonstrates how beautiful new public space and investments in infrastructure go hand in hand in building a great waterfront," said John Campbell, President and CEO of Waterfront Toronto. "Moving parking underground has allowed us to give this important waterfront site back to the people."

Designed by renowned landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates, Canada Square brings nature onto the site in an unconventional way. With more than 40 redwoods framing the plaza, Canada Square is a vertical garden with a theatricality befitting its Harbourfront Centre location.

"After more than a decade, Harbourfront Centre's dream of converting a parking lot into a beautifully landscaped urban oasis is finally a reality," said William J.S. Boyle, CEO of Harbourfront Centre. "It has transformed the center of our site for the enjoyment of the public."

The revitalization of Harbourfront Centre's site also includes Ontario Square, a large public plaza facing Queens Quay and Exhibition Common, an interim landscaped area with a café, Common Goods (Muvbox) kiosks and tented activity areas.

"The Canada Square project is an integral part of the incredible transformation already underway across Toronto's Waterfront. Parks and open spaces make cities more welcoming and are a vital part of the overall prosperity envisioned by the residents and businesses of this community," said the Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance. "The Harper Government is proud to be a part of this dynamic and forward-looking initiative which will attract businesses to the neighbourhood and help create jobs and growth for the region."

"Revitalizing Toronto's waterfront is integral to shaping the city's environment and ensuring Torontonians and all visitors benefit from a sustainable future," said the Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada. "With our Government's investment, we are helping to provide the necessary infrastructure to stimulate the growth of this neighbourhood which will benefit the Greater Toronto Area as a whole."

No detail was overlooked during the revitalization of this site. Even the new underground garage is more than just a functional piece of infrastructure – it is an enticing part of the urban experience. The garage includes a distinctive art piece called *Light Cascade* designed by award-winning architect and designer, James Carpenter. This impressive structure, comprised of a three-storey curtain wall of glass and mylar, rises 10 metres from the underground base of the garage through an aperture to Ontario Square above.

The revitalization of Harbourfront Centre's site is part of the overall transformation of the Central Waterfront which is improving the most heavily used and developed part of the waterfront. Construction is well underway on the transformation of Queens Quay, which will create a vibrant waterfront district by linking major destinations like Harbourfront Centre, Queens Quay Terminal, HTO Park and the Toronto Music Garden.

This is the second time Waterfront Toronto and Harbourfront Centre have worked together to improve this central waterfront area. In 2006, public access to the water's edge was improved by widening the promenade south of Harbourfront Centre and the addition of a wooden boardwalk and two new finger piers. This area has since become a vibrant and much-visited waterfront destination.

### **Waterfront Toronto**

The Governments of Canada and Ontario and the City of Toronto created Waterfront Toronto to oversee and lead the renewal of Toronto's waterfront. Public accessibility, design excellence, sustainable development, economic development and fiscal sustainability are the key drivers of waterfront revitalization.

### **Harbourfront Centre**

Harbourfront Centre is a Canadian charity operating the 10 prime acres of Toronto's central waterfront as a free and open public site. We celebrate the multiplicities of cultures that comprise Canada and enliven the city through the creative imaginations of artists from across the country and around the globe. Harbourfront Centre attracts more than 17 million visits to its site each year to experience 4,000 diverse public events and activities. Harbourfront Centre receives operational support from the Government of Canada and the City of Toronto and program funding from all levels of government, the private sector and individual donors.

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