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Open Streets TO Unveils Sponsors, Planned “Activity Hubs” Ahead of Inaugural August 17 Event

Holt Renfrew, Bike Share Toronto, community organizations lend support to Toronto’s largest free recreation event

TORONTO, ON, August 14, 2014 – Iconic brands, community organizations, educational institutions, and local businesses are lending support to Open Streets TO this summer. Holt Renfrew, Bike Share Toronto, and Downtown Yonge BIA are not only event sponsors, but are also active event participants. Other sponsors include Ryerson University, Bennett Jones LLP, Grandez Vous, The 519 Church Street Community Centre, the Toronto Parking Authority, and 8-80 Cities.

“We are excited to announce the sponsors of this year’s pilot program, without whom this event would not be possible,” said Emily Munroe, Open Streets TO Co-Chair. “The diversity of the organizations on board with the program demonstrates its broad appeal, and is an authentic representation of the communities where the event is taking place.”

Open Streets Toronto will take place on Sunday, August 17 and Sunday, August 31, 2014 between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. The event will close Bloor Street (between Spadina and Parliament) and Yonge Street (between Bloor and Queen) to car traffic, connecting some of the city’s most vibrant neighbourhoods. People traffic will replace car traffic, as the streets become “paved parks” where people of all ages, abilities, and social, economic and ethnic backgrounds can get active and connect with their community.

Holt Renfrew, in addition to being a sponsor, will participate in Open Streets TO by hosting what is known as an “Activity Hub” – a pop-up, interactive, participative program.

“We’re pleased to celebrate the community values of Open Streets, and look forward to greeting visitors from across the GTA. We will be welcoming everyone at our Activity Hub with a store-front magenta fashion runway, coffee and donut refreshments and even a dog watering station,” said James Watt, DVP and General Manager of Holt Renfrew Bloor Street.

The specialty luxury retailer will join the Royal Ontario Museum, Hard Candy Fitness, the Central YMCA, PrideHouse Toronto, St. Jamestown Arts, the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, and many others, in providing pop-up programming for all participants, free of charge, at numerous Activity Hubs along the entire Open Streets TO event route. A total of six such hubs, featuring dozens of local organizations, will provide physical and cultural activities, as well as entertainment.

A full description of Open Street TO's Activity Hubs can be found at openstreetsto.org.

Participants who arrive without their own wheels – bike wheels, that is – need not worry. The Toronto Parking Authority's Bike Share Toronto program will be offering 1,000 free 24-hour passes to Open Streets TO participants on each event day. Details on locations for the giveaways will be disseminated during the events via Open Streets TO's twitter feed (@OpenStreetsTO), among other communication channels.

Ryerson University will be performing comprehensive research around the event itself, focusing on key themes such as social inclusion and diversity, economic impact and the importance of physical activity. Results and analysis of the research will be shared with Open Streets TO with a goal of improving the event's impact beyond the pilot program.

"We are committed to bringing together the wider community and the public realm in new and creative ways – and Open Streets does exactly that," said Mark Garner, Executive Director, Downtown Yonge BIA. "We invite all Torontonians to come join us for a free, fun and unique celebration of our city this Sunday morning."

For more information about the event, visit: www.openstreetsto.org

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