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\*\*Toronto Real Estate Board Stats IMS, GTA by Value Sold 2008

†† Certain conditions may apply. ‡ Exclusive + MLS 2008

## CHATTER

### How does your garden grow?

The Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) is leading the creation of a "learning garden" located beside the Artscape Wychwood Barns (601 Christie St.).

The garden is nearly 40 metres long and will showcase a variety of native plants. According to Tanya Rhodes, a committee member of LEAF, the garden is split into three zones to represent three types of growing conditions: wetland, sun, and shade. "It's to experiment to see what native plants work well there," said Rhodes.

At the moment, there are only 10 plants, and it's likely that they will seem unfamiliar and exotic to many visitors to the garden. One such variety is the Jerusalem artichoke, which Rhodes describes as a cross between a potato and a chestnut. However, the purpose of the garden is not to confuse people, but to educate them, she said.

Amanda Gomm, who is the volunteer coordinator for LEAF and the Learning Garden committee chair, said that there will be a variety of native-based plants and they will have tags that give information on things such as their place of origin.

"People can come by the garden and be able to see what it is like to have a garden in progress [and] that we haven't just gone towards putting a whole bunch of plants in the ground," Rhodes said.

The organization has gained much support from people in the Wychwood area, with volunteers helping with weeding and picking up garbage. Currently, LEAF is coming up with a list of plants they'd like to see here, and they're looking for people to donate any plants they have for the garden. They still need volunteers to assist with planting and maintenance.

For more information about volunteering for LEAF, visit their website at [www.leaf.toronto.org](http://www.leaf.toronto.org), phone 416-413-9244, or contact Amanda Gomm at [amanda@leaf.toronto.org](mailto:amanda@leaf.toronto.org).

—Matt Ho

## Condo owners don't feel so harmonious

Though they're not the only ones unhappy with the recently approved harmonized sales tax (HST), the Condo Owners Association of Trinity-Spadina (COA-TS) took the opportunity to voice their displeasure collectively and publicly.

The tax—to take effect in July 2010—will combine the five per cent goods and services tax (GST) and eight per cent provincial sales tax (PST) and will be applied to a range of services that were previously exempt from the PST.

At a press conference held on Aug. 13 at The Element condominium (20 Blue Jays Way), Linda Pinnizzotto, president of the COA-TS, along with MPP Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina) and Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, laid out their reasons why the HST will negatively affect condo owners.

The tax impacts condo fees since many of the services those fees go towards—hydro, contracted services, landscaping, repairs, and maintenance—will be subject to the new tax, which will increase prices by eight per cent.

Packed into a room with nearly a hundred other people, the speakers offered their thoughts on HST and the political motives behind it.

"Instead of making housing more affordable, the McGuinty Liberals' harmonized sales tax will mean hundreds of dollars more per year in condo fees," said Horwath.

Statements from the Liberal party have said that the HST, a "value added" tax, will help protect manufacturing jobs in the province and will reduce paperwork costs for businesses by \$500 million each year.

A 2006 census found that there are 225,000 condos in Toronto, and from all of the cranes dotted around the city, it is likely that number has significantly risen since then.

The Ontario NDP have started a petition that reads, "Be it resolved, I am opposed to Dalton McGuinty's eight per cent sales tax grab and call on the Parliament of Ontario to cancel its plan to introduce a harmonized sales tax on July 1, 2010."

They hope to collect as many as 50,000 signatures, which will then be presented to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. At the press conference, Marchese signed the petition on behalf of 200 condo owners.

Not everyone in the crowd was impressed.

"The petition is a nice idea, but is it going to stop this tax?" asked Mike Cameron, a potential condo buyer who attended the press conference. "I doubt it."

—Claude Saravia

## Notes

The third annual **From the Ground Up** lecture care of Robert Rose, Inc. will be presented on Sept. 23 at Isabel Bader Theatre (93 Charles St. W.). There will also be a round-table discussion featuring a group of local food security advocates and experts who will offer solutions to the issue of food security. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$8 for seniors and students (with valid ID). Anyone who is interested may contact the Gardiner Museum by phone at 416-586-8080, by email at [mail@gardinermuseum.on.ca](mailto:mail@gardinermuseum.on.ca), or tickets can be purchased at the door.

**Ward 20's Environment Day**, which was postponed due the city labour disruption, has been rescheduled for Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Central Technical School (725 Bathurst St.). For further details visit [www.toronto.ca/environment\\_days/activities.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/environment_days/activities.htm).

The University of Toronto environmental community is coming together for **Earthcycle**, the school's environment week, from Sept. 21 to 26. The event is put together by the University of Toronto Environmental Resource Network and Bikechain and is also made possible by support from numerous other student and non-campus groups. Activities include lectures, games, films, and a parade from campus to other off-campus events. For more information, please visit [www.earthcycle.ca](http://www.earthcycle.ca).

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