

CITY IN BRIEF

By JENNY YUEN and KATE ZANKOWICZ

Park's new poop-and-scoop

Dufferin Grove Park will soon grow flowers with your poop.

Local artist Georgie Donais is working with the city to install Toronto's first outdoor compost toilet close to the park's playground.

"It's a statement that there are other options," says Donais, referring to the city's struggle to find a destination for its many thousands of tonnes of sludge. "[Our toilet] doesn't drain into the sewer system and doesn't go into Lake Ontario."

Right now, a 100-square-foot hole in the ground is the starting point for the toilet, which should be ready next summer.

Says Parks and Rec manager Sandy Straw, "Porta-potties are also an option, but then there's the whole question of disposal."

You can go number one or two in the compost toilet, and instead of flushing you put a scoop of wood chips in the bowl. The plan is for city staff to turn the crank on the outside of the stall once a day to filter material downwards. Fans will suck air down the toilet to minimize the stink factor.

Says Donais, "We're going to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the use and that there's no chance of odour."

Gord Perks of the Toronto Environmental Alliance says we should take advantage of any long- or short-term solution to the sludge problem. "Compost toilets have improved drastically in the last 25 years," he says.

But even though a compost toilet is cheaper and saves water, you can't replace an existing residential toilet with one for health reasons, according to **Ministry of Housing building code interpreter Al Suleman**.

If this pilot project doesn't crap out, the city will look at putting more compost toilets along the waterfront.

Watson's waterfront no-show

More than 50 Parkdale-High Park residents, dog walkers, cyclists and three local provincial candidates met Monday afternoon, August 28, to risk their lives together on an all-candidates waterfront trek down to the lake.

The walk, which began at King and Dunn and snaked down to Marilyn Bell Park, was sponsored by the **Parkdale-High Park Residents Waterfront Group** and was designed to raise awareness about the anti-pedestrian nature of the western waterfront.

But while **candidates Cheri DiNovo (NDP), David Hutcheon (PC) and Frank de Jong (Green party)** trudged along in sensible shoes, **local councillor and Liberal candidate Sylvia Watson**, who has made waterfront development central to her campaign, was a no-show.

"I had another long-standing prior commitment," she tells NOW. "Fortunately, I'm already very familiar with the waterfront, and the community knows I've always been a strong advocate of accessibility and revitalization. One of the aims of the tour was to familiarize candidates with the Western Beaches Master Plan, which I initiated as city councillor."

Watson has been facing criticism for her support of a 130-car parking lot on the median across from the Palais Royale and a new BMX sports park in Marilyn Bell Park.

Says **Roger Brook** of the Parkdale-High Park Residents Waterfront group, "When we asked our councillor to come and see how Parkdale accesses the waterfront, she told us that she's never walked to the waterfront before."

Navigating highways and overpasses, the crew was occasionally forced to bolt through traffic to

reach the park, Parkdale's only public green space on the shoreline.

In the aftermath of the dragon boat races, the area is now a fenced-off, makeshift parking lot for the CNE. Candidates gathered on the dead grass, surrounded by parking pay booths and cars, and mused about what could have been done differently.

De Jong spoke about the need to "build people-friendly cities." The chorus was overwhelmingly anti-car. DiNovo pointed out that the children who live in apartments on Jameson play in the hallways because "Parkdale does not have pedestrian-friendly beaches as the eastern waterfront does."

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