

The Board of Governors on April 17, 2009 approved the recommendations embodied in this report.

April 9, 2009

To: Board of Governors of Exhibition Place
From: Business Development Committee
Subject: **Potential Horticulture Exposition 2013**

ACTION REQUIRED

Summary:

Horticultural expositions and festivals have proven to be major attractions for tourism and opportunities for the horticultural industry to showcase and promote their products. These festivals benefit from the growing interest in the environment, environmental sustainability and gardening.

In 2008, Ontario Place, Exhibition Place and the CNE were approached by Michel Gautier representing the Horticultural Trades Association about the opportunity to host a major horticulture exposition in 2013. The proposal would be to stage a 6-month horticultural festival primarily at Ontario Place, however with use of Exhibition Place for its indoor show for a more limited time period which has the potential to coincide directly with the period of the CNE.

This would be a major international garden event, sanctioned by the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) and the International Exposition Bureau (BEI). The event will present a business opportunity for the horticulture industry of Ontario and Canada to showcase and promote their offerings. An event of the right scope and calibre will establish a major demand generator for Toronto and Ontario's tourism over an extended six month period, along with pre-and post visitation impacts. It will also provide an innovative way to demonstrate how today's contemporary gardens, private and public, are crucial to the development of a sustainable environment, to the quality of life of our communities and to reducing our environmental footprint.

Recommendations:

It is recommended by the Business Development Committee that the Board support, in principle, the concept of the Toronto Horticulture Exposition 2013 as set out in this report.

Financial Impact:

There is no financial impact from this report.

Decision History:

At its meeting of April 9, 2009, the Business Development Committee considered this report and recommended that the Board provide its support in principle for the Horticulture Exposition 2013.

Issue Background:

Horticultural Trades Association have been putting together a possible bid to host a major horticulture exposition in 2013 and have approached Ontario Place, Exhibition Place and the CNE as the location for this event. The Association will be issuing an RFP to prepare the Preliminary Feasibility Study and Business Case.

Comments:

In the last decade, the popularity of garden events has become one of the most rapidly growing tourist and horticultural activities throughout the world, with Parks, Gardens and Festivals among the top-10 world tourist offerings. World Garden Events contribute to an increased awareness of the environment and the need to develop creative, sustainable solutions and the design and horticultural industries have also benefited from this interest in celebrating new and innovative ways of gardening.

Europe has a longstanding tradition of International Garden Events that, in the last two decades, have left lasting legacies to the communities in which they have taken place, through landscaping and revitalization of frequently underdeveloped sites or by being the starting point for urban renewal interventions. Asia has also followed these steps, widely supported by their governments, by promoting Garden Events as national tourism destinations with world market appeal. In Canada, Montreal's Jean Drapeau Park, an island in the St-Lawrence River, is the living legacy of the only world class garden event ever to be held in North America - 'Les Florales de Montréal' in 1980, welcomed more than 1.5 million visitors to the 100 acre landscaped site, a heritage in itself of Expo '67.

Landscape Ontario and the Canadian Nursery and Landscape Association are proposing the organization of an A1 World Class International Garden Event/Horticultural Exhibition sanctioned by the International Association of Horticulture Producers (AIPH) and the International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE) to take place at in Toronto in the summer of 2013, primarily at Ontario Place although the indoor display is proposed for Exhibition Place. The concept would be to invite Canadian and international garden and landscape designers to create an exciting, cutting edge and innovative horticulture experience featuring the latest trends in gardening and sustainable environmental practices. The Toronto International Garden Rendezvous would be operational from the long weekend in May until the long weekend in October, 2013. Open 7 days a week from morning to evening.

At this point, the organizers of this event have requested the support of Exhibition Place on the basis that any firm commitment will require more information, analysis and negotiations if this project moves forward.