



Yonge Love Wins Top Honours from International Downtown Association **Prestigious Pinnacle Award Recognizes Downtown Yonge BIA's Innovative Consultation Campaign**

TORONTO September 9, 2016 – For the first time, a Toronto BIA has won top honours from the International Downtown Association (IDA). The Downtown Yonge BIA's innovative *Yonge Love* consultation campaign was singled out for global recognition, receiving the IDA's 2016 Pinnacle Award in the Leadership and Management category.

"Toronto is a great city with a great downtown. We are very proud to be recognized as a world leader," says Downtown Yonge's Executive Director Mark Garner. "We certainly believe *Yonge Love* was a remarkable project, and we are delighted to receive this prestigious international award."

Yonge Love was an innovative consultation spearheaded by Downtown Yonge, compiling more than 2,000 responses through an interactive mix of original video, editorial content, social media and street-level engagement. *Yonge Love* produced a unique picture of how people feel about Yonge Street, and what they would like to see as future improvements.

"We are now using what we learned through *Yonge Love* to help set our strategies and priorities. It is a very useful guide as we shape the evolution of Canada's most iconic street," Garner says.

The IDA is a world leader and champion for vital and livable urban centres. Its annual Downtown Achievement Awards recognize exceptional projects highlighting organizational advances.

Pinnacle Award winners – the IDA's the highest level of recognition – are featured on the organization's website as best practices. Other winners this year include Chicago's Riverwalk project, Huntsville, Alabama's book boxes program, and Washington, DC's NoMa Parks initiative.

"We are honoured to be named alongside such great cities as Chicago and Washington, and we congratulate them on their outstanding projects," Garner says. "We hope others – here in Toronto and around the world – will be inspired to build on these innovations, helping to create great downtown neighbourhoods."

Please see photo below.

About Downtown Yonge

The Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (DYBIA) is a catalyst for creating vibrant urban experiences and events in the heart of downtown Toronto. Representing more than 2,000 businesses and their employees, as well as the broader community of residents, students and visitors, the DYBIA champions attractive public spaces, popular events, safety and cleanliness. It plays an active role both at street level and in boardrooms, advocating for a thriving and diverse community of retailers, restaurants and services.

- 30 -

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Downtown Yonge BIA Executive Director Mark Garner (L) accepts the 2016 Pinnacle Award from David Downey, President and CEO of the International Downtown Association, at a ceremony in Atlanta.