

## GREATER TORONTO

## Just one thing . . .

As part of the Your City, My City series, The Star is asking prominent residents the same question: What one thing would you suggest to improve life in Greater Toronto?



## PIERS HANDLING

**Director and CEO of the Toronto International Film Festival**

"I'd start dreaming large dreams about city-building projects. Toronto is an amazing, liveable place. It has so much going for it.

We live in a tolerant, multi-racial community where people accept and celebrate their differences, on the whole feel safe and secure, and enjoy a system of social and health care that, despite its imperfections, is still pretty good.

I get the sense that we are on the verge of joining the elite cities of the world, but are somehow nervous and shy about stepping into the big league where boldness is rewarded.

Think big everywhere — architecturally, culturally, educationally, sports, entertainment, design. Nothing is impossible. And think locally and internationally at the same time. One does not preclude the other.

The Olympics can rub shoulders with amazingly innovative, small-scale, cutting edge projects. Bike lanes can co-exist with highways. So just go for it Toronto, and rally behind the risk-takers as they will turn this into a more liveable, exciting and creative city."

—Vanessa Lu



## DEBBIE FIELD

**Executive director of FoodShare**

"My Toronto would shout 'Yes to food!' and become the new global standard for universal access to healthy, high quality food. . . Municipal politicians need to publicly acknowledge the enormous potential of food, saying 'Yes' to community gardens, markets and bake ovens in parks and to healthy street carts. We need a food ambassador in the mayor's office to ensure all departments work together to prioritize food, and to work with provincial and federal governments to ensure that everyone has adequate access to healthy food.

Food also needs to be taken seriously as a planning issue, obligating developers of new housing to plot where fresh food will be available in the same way they prioritize schools.

And imagine the food tourism cultivated by food clusters and incubators and a Toronto Eats Local Sustainable campaign with voluntary targets to increase local sustainable food in restaurants, grocery stores, food carts and public outlets taking the current momentum around food to new heights."



## KARL SCHROEDER

**Science fiction writer**

"One idea is to have streetless neighbourhoods. We'd have parking lots, and many houses would be reachable by footpaths.

For example, part of your mortgage would include part ownership of a second co-house that would include amenities like an office space, entertainment centre, kitchen area, laundry facilities, local garage, and tools like lawnmowers for a single block.

Co-housing arrangements like this already exist. It's a way of building community and saving money. Roads now run willy-nilly throughout the city. If we simply removed them, we'd have oases of quiet and calm in the city.

None of the food we eat, or the amenities and services we buy, come from the local area. We live in a fantastically distributed economy. Most of our social relationships are with people who live distantly from us. But these (streetless) neighbourhoods would be places to germinate a slower pace of life."

—Vivian Song



## JOE HALSTEAD,

**Chair of Ontario Place**

"If I could do one thing, it would be to ensure more people participate in sports, leisure and recreation activities.

Apart from the value in health and better living, it does so much for you socially. It makes it that much easier to appreciate things, work and live with people, and it provides a better frame of mind.

It's self-development. It's also an economic issue because for those who are not physically fit or healthy, there is an increase in costs due to obesity or more health care needs.

I would want to ensure ample and more recreational and sports opportunities not only for kids, but also for people at the working life stage and seniors.

It needs to be affordable, and in many cases it needs to be seen as necessary public investment."

—Vanessa Lu



## RICHARD FLORIDA

**Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute**

"High-speed rail to Chicago, New York and Montreal, and the world's most pedestrian- and cycling-friendly city."

—David Olive

