

Park plans take root

Kimberly Spice

The city unveiled ambitious plans to connect two Downtown parks with an elaborate boulevard at a recent community meeting Feb. 3 at Metro Hall.

Clarence Square Park, located at Spadina north of Front St., and Victoria Memorial Square are set for makeovers that will drastically change the esthetics of Wellington West.

"Clarence Square is seen as a set piece to Victoria Square," said Coun. Adam Vaughan. "The goal eventually is to see that these two parks link up with Wellington becoming a green, grand boulevard so there is actually a loop of green space."

Plans developed by the design firm Planning Partnership, include the reconstruction of pathways into the square to cut from one corner to the other and the creation of a walkway on the outside of the square.

The park and square will also undergo major landscaping with the forestry department

cleaning out the deadwood and hauling away unsafe trees as well as planting new ones to revitalize the canopy.

The square upgrades will encompass the entire area, including the currently deteriorated surrounding road.

"Generally people pass through a central point," the Planning Partnership's David Leinster told the audience. "In the summer it would have water and in the winter it would be a beautiful thing to look at."

There will also be Central Park-style benches located around the park. Leinster added. "The plan is to take up all the asphalt paving and lay down a cobble street and add a series of bollards around the edge that can serve as bike locking pieces in addition to perennial planting around the square."

Vaughan encouraged residents to get involved, get their hands dirty and help make the neighbourhood a little better and a little greener.

Four residents from the area immediately put up their hands volunteering to work closely with the city and their contractors.

"This is a meeting where we are building something collectively as opposed to arguing

about what one person wants to do and another person wants to do," Vaughan stated. "We have little opportunity to grow parks in our neighbour-

hood but we have a number of parks in our neighbourhood that we can make better and that is what this project is all about."

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folks here you need to take this back to your officials," he said. "The goal here is to build a city not simply continually facilitate some pretty outrageous demands. You need a bit of give and take on the part of the railways to facilitate this project—it should not be this complicated."

"At some point what you do is rob the beauty of a bridge for some very simple and some very easy to solve engineering problems," he continued. "We really would like some more cooperation. I've had this meeting with the heads of GO and other rail officials and I won't back down from that. I understand it's your responsibility to get passengers in and out of the city and we have a responsibility to get people to and from the waterfront. [The proposals] should be done with elegance and safety in mind but at the end of the day you're driving costs that are a little extraordinary

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