

Clause embodied in Report No. 9 of the Toronto East York Community Council, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its Special Meeting held on July 30, 31 and August 1, 2002.

22

**Victoria Memorial Park (Square)
Park Restoration Plan Process
(Trinity-Spadina, Ward 20)**

(City Council at its Special Meeting held on July 30, 31 and August 1, 2002, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Toronto East York Community Council recommends that:

- (1) the following report (June 10, 2002) from the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism be adopted; and**
- (2) the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism submit the Victoria Memorial Square Restoration as a line item request for consideration during the 2003 Capital Budget deliberation.**

The Toronto East York Community Council submits the following report (June 10, 2002) from the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism:

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the park restoration plan process for Victoria Memorial Square.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Commissioners of Urban Development Services and Economic Development, Culture and Tourism continue to work with the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association and other stakeholders to develop a plan for the restoration of Victoria Memorial Square;**
- (2) staff work with the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association and other stakeholders to identify potential sources of funding and fundraising opportunities for park restoration efforts;**

- (3) staff work with the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association and other stakeholders to establish a park advisory group;
- (4) Works and Emergency Services and Urban Development Services staff ensure that other civic initiatives are complementary with the park restoration plan and, where feasible, integrate components of the park restoration plan as part of area-wide improvements; and
- (5) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its January 29, 2002 meeting, Toronto East York Community Council heard a presentation by the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association in relation to improvements to Victoria Memorial Square. At its February 13th, 2002 meeting, Toronto City Council requested the Commissioners of Urban Development Services and Economic Development, Culture and Tourism to work with the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association to develop a plan which will restore Victoria Memorial Square.

Comments:

Victoria Memorial Square is located in the area south of King Street, between Bathurst Street and Spadina Avenue. Approximately 2 acres in size, it includes the City's first European cemetery, opened in 1793 as the garrison cemetery for Fort York. The last burial was in 1863, and since the 1880s the site has been leased by the City from the Department of National Defence as a public park. In 1902, a War Memorial commemorating those who fell in the War of 1812 was added and remains to this day. In 1990, Victoria Memorial Square, known municipally as #10 Niagara Street, was included on the Inventory of Heritage Properties by the Toronto Historical Board. Attachment 1 shows the layout of the park in its current condition.

In addition to its unique character and history, Victoria Memorial Square is also important as one of only four parks within the King-Spadina area. This area is undergoing significant residential intensification and has been identified as a priority area for local parkland acquisition. Given the area's low level of parkland provision and the limited opportunities to acquire land in the part of the city, it is important to ensure that existing parks, such as Victoria Memorial Square, function effectively to meet the community needs.

The ongoing residential intensification taking place in the King-Spadina area has raised several park-related concerns, including the need to upgrade such things as lighting, drainage, entry areas, walkways, and playground equipment. Many of the over 344 numbered graves are shallow, raising concerns ensuring that the burial ground itself is appropriately marked and protected.

The King-Spadina Official Plan Part II identifies Victoria Memorial Square as one of five Areas of Special Identity. The Part II Plan identifies one of its objectives as 'Protecting and Reinforcing King-Spadina's Public Spaces' and it notes that Victoria Memorial Square will play an increasingly important amenity role in serving future mixed uses in area. The existing

King-Spadina Community Improvement Plan notes that Victoria Memorial Square shows signs of deterioration, and is worthy of careful upgrading befitting its unique character and importance within the community.

The park's prominence also suggests that other civic works (e.g., road and streetscape improvements) in the area should support the directions established in the planning documents and that the park restoration plans have begun to outline. The King-Spadina Community Improvement Plan proposed a number of public realm improvements, including those to Victoria Memorial Square.

Over the last few months, the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association, working with City staff and consulting the community, have developed a preliminary concept plan, Attachment 2, for future park restoration and improvements. The components of this plan were conceived as a result of a community workshop held in March, 2002 and a public open house held in June 2002.

The attached Park Restoration Concept Plan is preliminary only, but will form the basis for further discussion on detailed design, phasing, funding, fundraising and implementation. Certain elements of the plan, including the concession, performance space, and the notion of relocating the War of 1812 monument, are ideas only and will require further review. Consultation with additional stakeholders, including the Department of National Defence, will also be included within the next steps of this process.

The Park Restoration Concept Plan is consistent with the proposals identified within the King-Spadina Community Improvement Plan for Victoria Memorial Square, including upgraded lighting, seating, walkways, streetscape and edge condition improvements. Special attention will also be given to making sure that the significance of Victoria Memorial Square to Fort York, the Garrison Common, and the City of Toronto as a whole, is interpreted within the park.

Conclusions:

City staff will continue to work with the Wellington Place Neighbourhood association and other stakeholders to develop a restoration plan for Victoria Memorial Square, establish a Park Advisory Group, investigate funding sources and fundraising opportunities, and work interdepartmentally to ensure proposed improvements are co-ordinated with other initiatives.

Contact:

Frank Kershaw, Director, Policy and Development
Tel: 416-392-8199; Fax: 416-395-0728; fkershaw@city.toronto.on.ca

(Attachments referred to in the foregoing report were forwarded to all Members of the Toronto East York Community Council with the agenda for its meeting on July 17, 2002, and copies are on file in the office of the City Clerk.)