



November 15, 2016

Dear TEYCC,

**Re: Building a new downtown park on the City-owned 2.3 acre site at 28 Bathurst Street**

We have a rare opportunity right now to build a 2.3 acre downtown park on City-owned land.

28 Bathurst is a 2.3 acre site located on the west side of Bathurst Street and Front Street West, just north of the rail corridor and Fort York. This is in a high growth area of the city where new parks are sorely needed. The Niagara area increased in population by 83% between 2001 and 2011 and even more significantly in the last few years with a number of condominiums coming online and still under construction.

The 2.3 acre and mostly rectangular site would support active recreation programming that is in high demand in downtown parks and is strategically located to connect the east end of the West Toronto Railpath to the downtown core. The new population in the area is putting pressure on existing parks and a new park at this site would serve the local community with children's play areas and active recreation uses.

This is a rare opportunity for us as a City to use City-owned land. It would be both challenging and expensive for us to find and purchase an alternative property in the neighbourhood. According to City staff, land in the downtown is \$30 to \$60 million per acre. This site is already owned by the City and would cost approximately \$4 million to remediate.

This now vacant site was formerly the location of a lead smelter and afterwards was filled with debris and battery casings. The land was expropriated in 1988 and a portion of the site to the north was remediated to residential standards. The remediated portion is now known as 34 Bathurst Street and is home to a daycare centre and a transitional residence. A park at 28 Bathurst would complement these uses.

Parks staff have indicated to my office that they have an interest in the site and can find the capital funding for remediation, design, and construction at 28 Bathurst. They estimate it would cost approximately \$4 million to move through environmental assessments and remediation of the site, far less than purchasing a similar sized site in the downtown, if such a site were available.

In 2011, City Council declared the property surplus with the intention to transfer it to Build Toronto. Despite significant efforts, Build Toronto has not been able to find a financially viable development for this site that is of a scale appropriate to the context. The terms of the transfer have not been agreed to and the site has been in limbo for the last 5 years. I have been advocating that the site in its entirety be turned into a public park.

Throughout 2013 and 2014 Community Planning, my office, and the local community worked on the South Niagara Planning Strategy which was approved by City Council in August 2014. The Strategy called for a further increase in the amount of park space in the South Niagara area and included the creation of Regeneration Areas intended for a broad mix of commercial, residential, light industrial, institutional, live/work, and parks and open space. The Plan placed an emphasis on the creation of public open space, providing both visual and physical connections to Fort York and the waterfront, and adding a variety of land use and densities including community services and facilities. These recommendations were consistent with what we heard very clearly from the local community.

# Councillor **Mike Layton**



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The property would need to be rezoned to Parks and Open Space to accommodate a parks use. It is for that reason I am asking you to support my motion to initiate the process of changing the use to Parks. This would allow us to hold a community meeting and for Community Planning to report back to TEYCC with their recommendations in the new year.

I am requesting that TEYCC request the Director of Community Planning, Toronto and East York District to:

- a. initiate the process of amending the Zoning By-law, and Official Plan, to change the land use designation from Regeneration Areas to Parks, and the zoning to an appropriate Park zone category, at 28 Bathurst St;
- b. host a community meeting, with the Ward Councillor and neighbouring Ward Councillor, on the City-initiated By-law amendments noted in Part 1 above, in December 2016, and give notice for this community meeting to landowners and residents within 120 metres of the site; and
- c. report back to the Toronto and East York Community Council at its meeting on February 22, 2017, with recommended amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law 438-86, as amended.

Sincerely,

Councillor Mike Layton  
Ward 19, Trinity-Spadina