

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM52.3	ACTION			Ward:All
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Hydro Corridor Lease Agreements - by Councillor Cesar Palacio, seconded by Councillor Joe Mihevc

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Cesar Palacio, seconded by Councillor Joe Mihevc, recommends that:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate a licence lease agreement with Hydro One (Ontario Realty Corporation) as an initial measure that can transform the Hydro Corridor lands located north of Dupont Street and the CP Railway, and running from EarlsCourt Park to the Annex, into parkland with recreational amenities that are compatible with the land conditions and that this matter be considered during the 2015 Budget Process.

Summary

The west-end hydro corridor has the potential to become an iconic landscape in the City of Toronto, as it can provide a continuous green space for local residents. These subject lands are located north of Dupont Street and the CP Railway, and run from EarlsCourt Park to the Annex. Currently, this corridor provides much needed spatial relief to an area that is compact and densely built. It also serves a community that is one of the most park-deprived neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto. However, only pockets of these subject lands are leased by the City, leaving behind fragmented open spaces with large areas of abandoned landscapes. This includes: the Wiltshire Avenue Corridor, located between Davenport Road and St. Clair Avenue West; the Geary Avenue Lands, located east of Dovercourt Road to Geary Parkette; and the Geary Avenue Lands, located west of Dovercourt Road. These open landscapes have a tremendous potential to be re-used as a linear park. It can provide the community with much needed amenities that will enhance the City's public realm, while providing residents with a safe and accessible place to enjoy the outdoors.

This subject corridor is owned by the Ontario Realty Corporation with Hydro One as the primary user. The Province has a policy for secondary uses of hydro corridors in place (the Provincial Secondary Land Use Program) and the City already has long-term licences for eight portions of the hydro corridor that are City parks. These parks are well used by the community and include sports fields, splash pads, allotment gardens and playgrounds. However, by not

leasing the entire corridor, many of these open spaces have been abandoned and left in poor conditions. It also deprives the local community of a continuous physical connection for pedestrians and cyclists.

Given the community's strong support towards the revitalization of these lands, Workshop Architecture, an architectural firm located in Ward 17 Davenport, recently organized an international design competition - Green Line Ideas Competition. This competition attracted many bold visions and proposals from architects, landscape architects, planners, artists and community members that contributed to an overall vision for the public use of this subject hydro corridor. Seventy-seven proposals were submitted to this competition from around the world, all of which clearly elaborated the need to revitalize and reclaim these lands for public use as a measure to enhance the City's public realm.

Similar to Toronto's Kay Gardner Beltline Park and New York City's High Line, infrastructure and its respective open spaces must be re-evaluated for future and innovative uses. It is therefore imperative that the City take the initiative to pursue ways that can enable the community to use these lands in new and enjoyable ways.

(Submitted to City Council on June 10 and 11, 2014 as MM52.3)

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM52.3