
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM36.13	ACTION			Ward:27
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Unlocking the Opportunity to Revitalize Allan Gardens - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Lucy Troisi

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

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

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Lucy Troisi, recommends that:

1. City Council adopt "Refresh: A Vision Document for Allan Gardens" as the guiding framework for the revitalization of Allan Gardens Park.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to consult with the Friends of Allan Gardens, Indigenous Place Making Council, the Garden District Residents Association and other key community stakeholders on a work plan to advance the principles of Refresh.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report to the April 9, 2018 meeting of the Parks and Environment Committee on possible governance, programming, place-making projects and funding models to help realize this vision.

Summary

Allan Gardens is a special place in Toronto. Historically, it is the traditional territory of many Indigenous people including the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat and most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit River.

It became Toronto's first civic park, following its sale to the City by George William Allan. It has been a historical gathering place for social change and political protest, from the Oscar Wilde lecture of 1882 to G20 demonstrations in 2010. The history and prominence of the park has been recognized by the City in both long-term policy through the Downtown East Planning Study and the Garden District Heritage Conservation District.

The Indigenous Place Making Council is working to restore Indigenous presence to downtown Toronto and to strengthen relationships to existing non-profit organizations nearby such as the Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto. A registered non-profit volunteer group of residents, the Friends of Allan Gardens, have lent professional expertise, consultation and

thought into ensuring the park's history of "horticulture innovation and social activism" evolves. In collaboration with Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Friends of Allan Gardens have created a new vision document known as "Refresh," that aligns with the City's 2006 Master Plan for Allan Gardens and builds upon the intention to turn the park into a destination for visitors, expand on the programming and develop it further as an event venue.

Beyond the history, Allan Gardens fills a number of important roles in our community. Downtown Toronto has historically been underserved by parkland and open space, making Allan Gardens one of the largest parcels of parkland downtown. It features two distinct dog off leash areas, a beautiful new children's playground and spaces for residents of all ages who seek to escape the hustle of the city or who simply want to make the most of a beautiful sunny day. The Allan Gardens Conservatory is one of the oldest in Canada and holds a wealth of horticulture from across the world, and is free and open to the public 365 days per year. It also provides a gathering place for many residents, including the vulnerable, and hosts a myriad of community events.

Allan Gardens has the exciting challenge of balancing all of this history and the demands that come with being one of the precious few parks of this size in the downtown. Incredible work by volunteers and non-profits has already taken place and these groups and individuals are interested and willing to continue to leverage their experience, skills, and partnerships to revitalize this city asset. A new governance model will allow for this work to continue and support City Council on preserving and celebrating this incredible park.

In order to advance this important work, City Council should formally adopt Refresh as a guiding document for moving forward and direct staff to develop a more detailed framework for governance and a work plan to help realize the vision through programming and other such initiatives.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM36.13

Refresh - A Vision Document for Allan Gardens - Part 1

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-111776.pdf>)

Refresh - A Vision Document for Allan Gardens - Part 2

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-111780.pdf>)