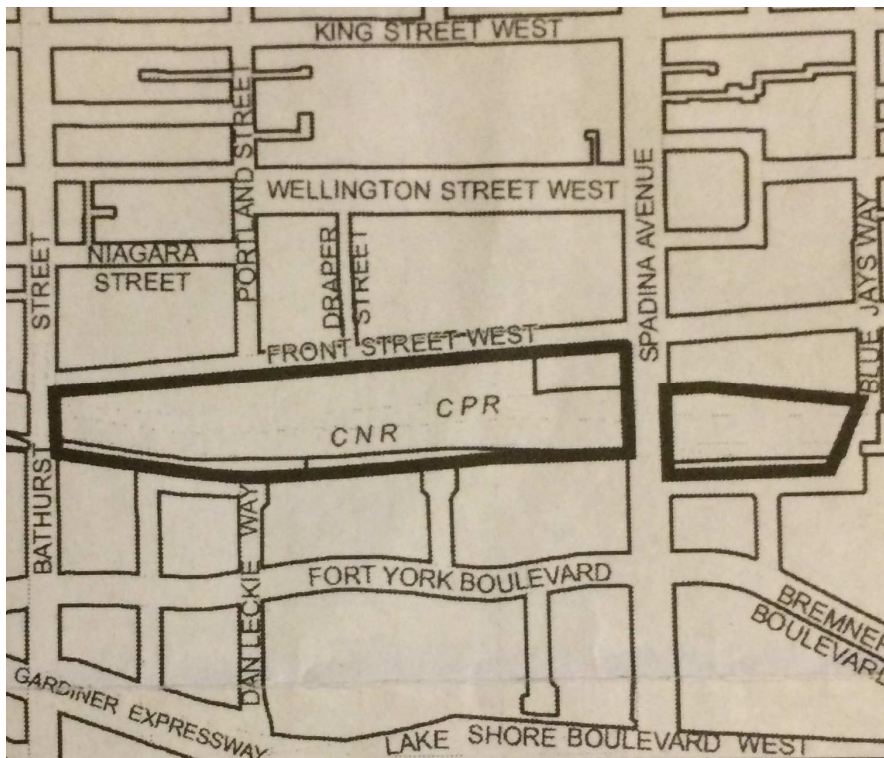


The possibilities of achieving a Symbolic Canadian / Torontonion Identity for The Railway Lands development project over the rail corridor between Bathurst Street and Blue Jays Way -Toronto

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Among many suggestions to turn this site to a park, I hope that the rail corridor will not be a “**narrower corridor**” following a typical urban design concept like adding a continuous strip of new buildings (including some new Towers) along Front street in a way that blocks this street (visually), isolating the park like a private park for those new buildings and towers rather than shaping it as a public park that belongs to the whole city.

People need to have a “defined central” urban space / spaces “within” this corridor (whether defined by Architectural or Landscape boundaries) to meet, interact and celebrate, they really need Centrality; and “not” a narrower corridor linearity (which turns the park to a path) that

only indicates moving and just moving! rather than meeting and interacting in a more central place...

I will try to discuss some points concerning this project, which include the possibilities of achieving a symbolic Canadian / Torontonion identity to focus on expressing the uniqueness of Toronto among the other important cities of the world.

1) Creating a New “Central” Urban Space; A Symbol of “Unity”!

I’m glad to start this discussion with the possibility of creating a Central Urban Space like an open “Heart” for the Whole area, this space can be shaped like a “central” collective place within “the railway lands corridor” to unite Portland Street, Draper Street, Dan Leckie Way, the Iceboat terrace, and of course Front Street West, all with new possible linear links which connect Bathurst and Blue Jays Way passing by Spadina.

A new public “Heart” to be like a “Forum” or an “Agora” were people can gather, meet, and celebrate, surrounded by many social public activities around. This Central Urban Space can be beautifully composed, defined and shaped by New Architectural and/or Landscape boundaries.

Most of the modern cities in the world have turned to:

- Streets and streets to move and just move rather than places to gather and meet to create different levels of social interaction.
- Open universal and undefined spaces and parks with independent separated buildings like objects here and there, rather than defined urban spaces and places shaped by buildings to unite those buildings.

I hope that this project will be a good opportunity to break that modern routine...

The New Central Urban Space can also be a symbol of “Unity”, an expression of composing a Variety within a “Oneness”, like a Diversity within a Unity that speaks about the Canadian Unity too...

2) The Architectural and Landscape Boundaries around can be Shaped Like Gates or Arcades; “Openness and Clarity”

The suggested new central urban space will be a “Heart” inside this area. This “Heart” cannot be isolated from the city or blocked by new buildings or other objects which will shape it and define it. The Heart is to be clearly opened to the city around to let the city breath properly.

When the buildings are composed and located like independent separated objects having no interrelations, they can hardly define a central urban space (Heart), even when they might provide indirect functional opennings between a Heartless site or park and the city around!

Buildings, and all other Architectural and Landscape boundaries need to interrelate to define urban spaces, and to provide a possible openness, they may unite to shape Gates and Arcades (for example) to let this Heart beautifully interrelate with the city around.

A suggested Urban and Architectural language can be created to symbolize the importance of the "Clarity" we all believe in and appreciate in opening our hearts to each one another to build our country all together (as One).

For example; This Symbolic language can be expressed in achieving a possible dialogue between:

"True Gates" that we all respect and appreciate, symbolized by positive "True Urban and Architectural gates" which lead clearly to the Heart and the other new urban central spaces inside this project,

And,

"False Gates" that we all avoid, symbolized by negative "Fake Urban and Architectural gates" which might either be blocked, locked or lead to Nowhere!

3) The Lake can have a beautiful Symbolic presence in this project...

"I Love All the Possible Dialogues Between the City and The Lake!"

Lake Ontario is an incredible source of Inspiration and Romance for Toronto, many times when I take a walk far from the lake, whether in downtown or in other places inside the city "I miss the Lake"; that true source of magic and uniqueness...

Sometimes I dream of the possibility of (symbolically or actually) digging and inviting the Lake to the Heart of the City and to other places in the city to create beautiful and Romantic Urban "Inside"/ "Insides", to start a nice Dialogue between The City and The Lake....

Other times, I Imagine that wherever we punch the ground (whether in public or private places) we can give a new chance to symbolically inviting the Lake to re-emerge anywhere in the city! to let the "water" move and bring Romance and Pleasure everywhere within any affordable possibilities!

Water can Unite the city, and shape a Uniqueness in Toronto that can make the City different than all the other cities of the world.

And Water flows like Emotions...

In Venice, Water covers the whole city like Emotions Out of Control!

In Toronto, we can deal with Water like "Emotions under Control" ... !

To start in certain public and private places in the beginning, like this project... Then to have a future plan to invite the Lake to other Urban and Architectural projects... We can start step number "One" now.... For example; I love to see the Water flows under glazed paving in selected

parts; here and there in the city, to remind us of the Lake... That Beauty where our city belongs....

In this project, we can imagine the trains moving under a glazed ceiling that is covered by a flow of water! Like watching the trains moving under the water from above.... And watching the skies through a flow of water when we go down to the trains level, where light shines as if we are symbolically drowning in positive emotions under control (under the lake)!

A Mountain of symbolic “mirror and glass glittery snowflakes” can shape a water fall near Bathurst (for example) like a symbolic gate that welcomes the lake to enter the site symbolically.... To let the water flow and move over the glazed ceilings that cover the railway level. Water might have the depth of a one storey height; which is the same height of a proposed single floor over the trains level and under the park, this proposed floor level that might include a parking and many other multipurpose spaces which will have incredible windows exposed directly to water.... the roof of this proposed floor will be the new “Heart”, the new Urban Central spaces, the park and the landscaping level.

4) “Snow” The Source of Water... Expressing Snowflakes as an example of The Symbols of “Respecting Nature in Canada” ...

I love to imagine glittery snowflakes of mirror and glass like crystals everywhere!

Fountains and water falls composed by “mirror and glass snowflakes”, like a source of “Water” and incredible reflections of “Light” ...

Beautiful Space boundaries of Crystal Snowflakes can shape Urban and Landscape Spaces, feeding water pools, streams, and all the other areas covered by water...

Whether those Space boundaries are like:

Walls of “mirror and glass crystal snowflakes”

Or Mountains of those crystal flakes....

Or even pieces of Sculpture composed by those Crystal Flakes

This symbolic presence expresses the “Respecting of Nature” in Canada.

One of the greatest questions in the history of this country has always been:

How to build a country with total respect to the severe natural and environmental conditions?

The freezing winter has always been one of the greatest challenges which the Canadians have faced in keep moving forward to build this country.

The continuous question is: How to make those extreme natural conditions a positive part in expressing Canada, and how to make them a source of Beauty rather than considering them as problems to be solved or as a source of suffering that has to be aggressively changed!

The suggested “Snowflakes of mirror and glass” treatments in this project might represent possible symbolic answers to those questions....

5) “Water” a Source of Life... “Maple Leaves a Symbol of Life!”

“The Unbroken Broken” The Symbols of New Beginnings and the

“Glory of Life” ...

The Iconic presence of Life in this project can be expressed (for example) by the way that the Crystal Snow Flakes fill The Lake and feed The Earth with “Water” to let Life begins after a severe Winter.... When those flakes turn to “Water” to let Life begins, and to let the beautiful Maple leaves shine in Spring, and Summer....

After the Brokenness of Winter, New Beginnings shape the Glory of Life when the Maple Leaves cover the Trees, the way that the snowflakes melt to give Life to those leaves! Like a fairy tale that speaks about a way that snowflakes turn to maple leaves! Fall is the season when those Maple leaves return back to the Earth, and their Water returns back to the Sky.... When the final chapter of this fairy tale speaks about the Way that those falling leaves turn to “Snow Crystal Maple leaves”! to fall from heaven in Winter as Crystal Snow Flakes again....

An example of a unique story that can be told both in the language of Architecture and Urban design to compose symbolic paths that can shape a uniqueness in Toronto and All Canada!

The Park in this corridor project can tell the story of all seasons which can be shaped by a landscape path along the corridor.....

One of the most beautiful Symbols that speaks about a Uniqueness in Canada is the symbols that express Canada as The Country of New Beginnings....

New Beginnings define the Glory of Life, and this matter gives another possibility of shaping a symbolic presence of Life (other than the previous Iconic one) in this project, in Architecture, Urban design and in Landscape composing a relationship between “The Inside and The Outside” in different levels, a relationship which can be achieved by applying the “Unbroken Broken” theme about new beginnings and a glory of Life after many difficulties, challenges and pains, a theme which I might use the following words to explain it:

The Unbroken Broken I Love New Beginnings With Every New Beginning; We Go Against a Certain Flow of Difficulties.... And This Flow Will Crush Us! Yes, It Will Crush Us Externally; But It Can Never Touch Us Internally " When We Deeply Believe "..... When We Deeply Believe That We Can Go, and When We Keep Going on Our (UNBROKEN) Inside will Surely Support Our (BROKEN) Outside This Is Our True (UNBROKEN BROKEN) New Beginning... Which is A Victory on All Difficulties; And A True Sign of Life; In Giving Birth to a New World ... A New World that had never been before... Leaving All the Pains and Death Behind... To Mark a Glory That Might have Simply Started with a Dream!

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Note: The attached site image was sent with The City of Toronto ‘s invitation to attend the Community Consultation Meeting /September 12, 2017