

Glenn Wheeler
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June 22, 2026

Dear Mayor Chow and Councillors:

Re: 2026.IE30.8 – Queen’s Park North Donation – Concept Plan Update Report

I am writing as a resident who lives near Queen’s Park North and relies on this precious urban forest as a space of peace and tranquility amid one the most densely populated areas of the city.

I have attended all of the consultation meetings that have taken place over the last number of months and share the widely expressed concerns expressed at those sessions about the impact of this plan on the character of the park and about the balance between donor priorities and public priorities.

To what extent is the concept plan the result of donor conditions rather than public need and desire for this special space?

Councillor Matlow referred to those concerns at the March meeting of council.

He stated as follows:

As long as the private dollars that philanthropists – the Westons or whomever – want to contribute to the public realm, they’re fine with it [meaning members of the public] and they’re fine with acknowledging their generosity, as long as there is public accountability about the process, there is public oversight over design and procurement, that there is genuine public feedback and consultation as part of that space and ultimately full accountability and transparency when it comes to all the steps that have been taken—in other words, so that they know that the plans and the designs weren’t done simply at the request of the private philanthropist but that the community that cares about the public space knows that their voice and their vision were part of that too.

Councillor Matlow went on to ask city staff:

Do we have a very clear protocol because – the reason I ask is that what I’m picking up from the community is that there has been some either confusion or worry about how much has this been led by – is it the dog or the tail – are we doing this for the Westons or are we working with the Westons for the community?

In response to Councillor Matlow’s comments, city staff stated that protocols are in place and they would be shared:

There are protocols – it might be good to bring forward as part of this exercise that we also reiterate the process we go through and you've seen that happen through this process already but we will bring back what some of those written protocols which are well defined because this is not the first time nor will be it the last time...

Despite this undertaking from city staff, there is no reference in the staff report regarding the nature of the protocols that are in place, and how they have been applied to this project. In particular, no information has been provided as to what, if any, conditionality there is in the donation.

As Councillor Fletcher noted at the March council meeting, this is the largest ever donation provided for a Toronto parks project. It is essential that the council not give short shrift to public priorities in order to secure private money.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

"Glenn Wheeler"

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