

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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To: City Council

Re: IE30.8-- Queen's Park North donation

June 22, 2026.

Harbord Village Residents' Association represents members in the Spadina, Bloor, College and Bathurst catchment of the Downtown. We are a park deficient area. For us, Queen's Park North is our nearest local park. A short walk across the U of T and we feel blessed to be under the protection of the heritage trees, watching people, squirrels, chipmunks, nesting birds along with our neighbours going about their daily lives.

The future of our beloved park, locked in an unseemly contest with a \$50 million donation that dictates major change, is now before council. Over the last ten months, we have had the impression that candor, transparency and responsibility to the public has been sacrificed to a need to protect the Weston offer by accepting the donor's vision.

Residents' Associations repeatedly requested dimensioned drawings of the many elements included in the donor's designs. Staff insisted there were no drawings. In fact, an FOI has revealed fully dimensioned drawings were circulated by staff in January, 2026, and never released to the public.

The 54-page staff report before you was released too late for detailed comment at the Infrastructure Committee. Billed as a concept report, it reads more like an approval, putting the final design out of reach of timely future community and councillor input.

Consider the café, a building which will transform the heart of the park into a happening. Staff endorses a consultant's feasibility study for a 40-seat, 204 sq. m. all season restaurant now called a café with 80-100 outside seats, including rooftop seating, where amplified music will surely be irresistible. In addition, the final footprint of the café building is now 251 sq. m., increased by 25%, by adding to it the workshop/classroom that had been cancelled. And plans call for a half basement located next to the subway tunnel.

This report is the first time we have seen actual café dimensions. The consultant's report was not shared. The questions that were the basis for the consultant's evaluation are

unknown. Could a smaller café operating over a shorter season be viable in that space, provide less challenge to the health and quiet of the park? We may never know.

If the staff report is left to stand, the University of Toronto is empowered to move ahead to implement the café, as though all that matters is financial feasibility. This, after months of work the community and the Infrastructure Committee had managed to put in three separate pillars of protection: forestry, heritage and nature of the park itself. We built guardrails against excessive change. Why not use them?

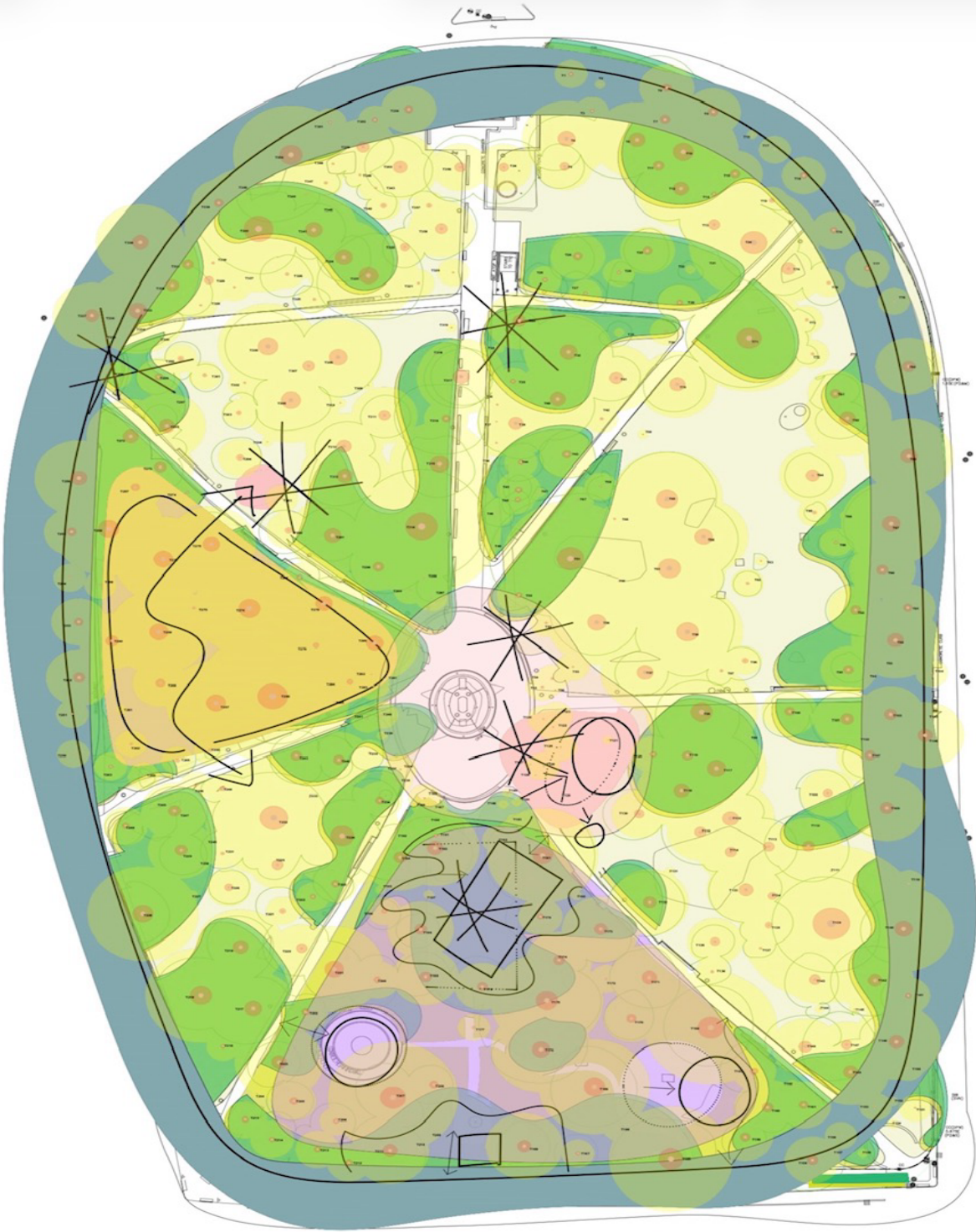
There's no assurance in the staff report the proposed design development Working Group will have a meaningful voice in the size, placement or use of the building or six other elements. These include a commemorative garden 20.05 m. x 38.65 m. occupying the south centre space, according to the only plans revealed through the FOI. Without an effective Working Group, there is no outside expert opinion on whether construction or subsequent servicing would create unacceptable damage to the park, whether the cumulative impact of the many elements will overwhelm the park's heritage values or ambience. Nor are there grounds for believing a Working Group recommendation for a smaller building that includes the café could lead to a changed design.

Now, a day away from the meeting of council, we await a report from the City Manager outlining the final design approval process requested by the Infrastructure Committee two weeks ago. It may resolve some or all of these issues. But we are troubled by the time it has taken to finalize this report. If you are proposing major changes to a cherished park, you would think creating a transparent process with a city empowered to make decisions in the best interest of the park, not of the Westons, would be a simple enough request to fill.

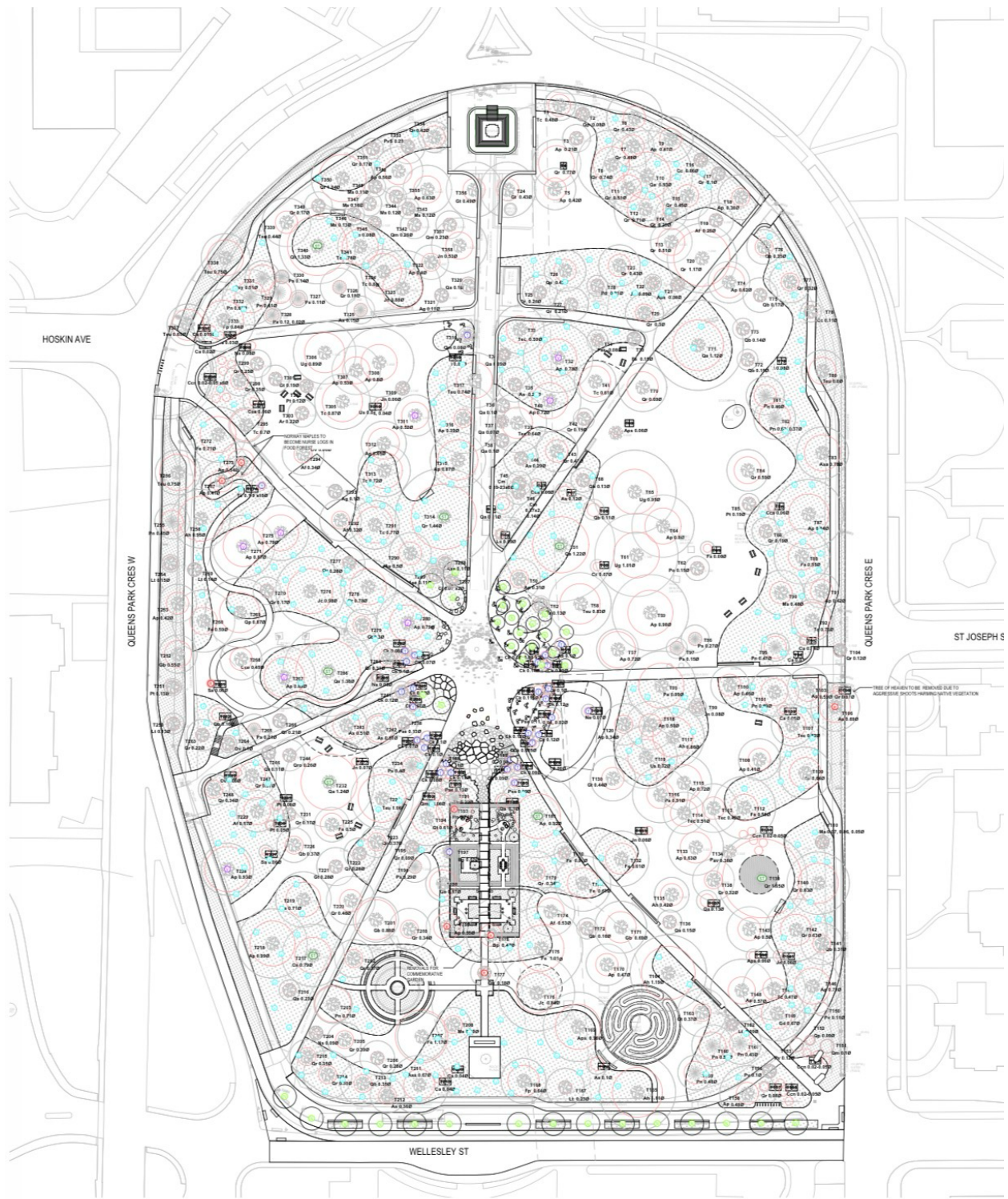
We ask council to do the following:

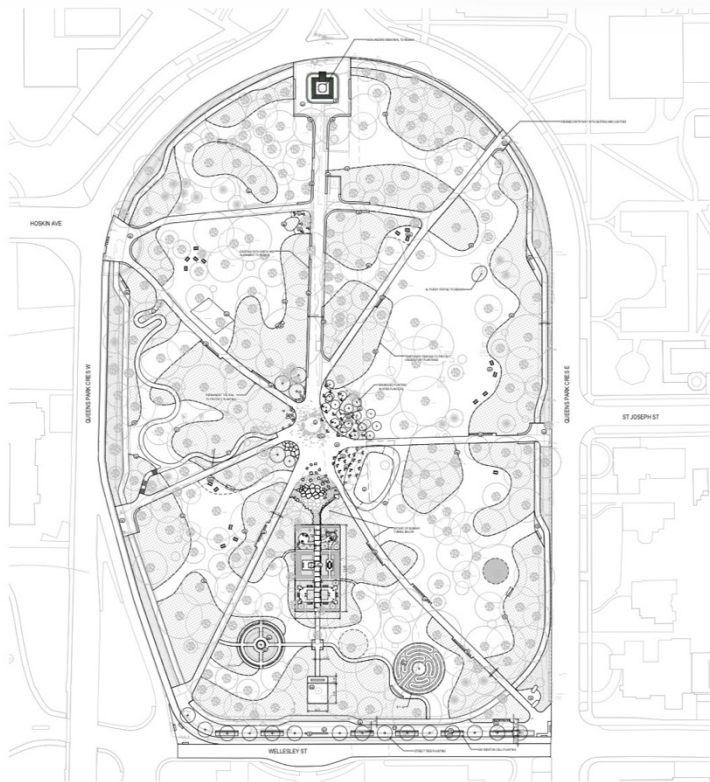
- Release the MOU between the city and the Westons; return any subsequent agreements among the City, the U of T, and the Westons to the Infrastructure Committee for ratification;
- Return the final design to the Infrastructure Committee for approval;
- Free the Working Group from any limitation imposed by conditions of the donation;
- Release the restaurant-café viability study to the public;
- Release staff from any obligation to bring home the grant and restore a duty to share information by committing to no more hidden agendas.

The following 'drawing' of squiggles and blobs was last presented to the final public consultation meeting May 11, 2026 as the best available version of plans. The café is the circle beside the star east of the statue. The rectangle is the ceremonial garden.



When the following plans had been available for four months and could have been easily updated:





- 1 Tree walk
- 2 Embedded Council Fire
- 3 Boulders
- 4 Cafe / Washroom building
- 5 Potential basement
- 6 Movable furniture
- 7 Interactive water feature
- 8 Flexible performance platform
- 9a Commemorative Garden with enclosure
- 9b Commemorative Garden horticultural planting
- 9c Commemorative Garden labyrinth
- 9d Commemorative Garden reflecting pool with stone seating
- 10 New water feature at site of Austin Floyd fountain
- 11 Enhanced Wellesley streetscape
- 12 Permeable aggregate running path
- 13 Relocated King Edward VII statue
- 14 Active loop rest area
- 15 Gateway with seating, planting, and lighting
- 16 Understorey planting
- 17 Food forest planting
- 18 Linear benches
- 19 Stone seating
- 20 Open planters
- 21 Stone paving
- 21a Feature paving inlay
- 22 Permeable paving - aggregate
- 22a Permeable paving - unit
- 23 Picnic table
- 23a Picnic tables with accessible surfacing
- 24 Restoration zone platform (example location)
- 25 Workshop

GENERAL NOTES
 1. To be read in conjunction with Consolidated Concept Plan Package dated Jan. 27, 2024
 2.

Queen's Park North
Concept Plan
 1:600
 2026-01-25

Which leaves us with a troubling question: whose interests were served in the public consultation process by denying the public information?

With respect,

Sue Dexter,

Board,

Harbord Village Residents' Association.

cc. John Ralston Saul