

Re: EX 29.3 Update on Weston Foundation for Queen's Park North Revitalization

Dear Members of the Executive Committee,

March 9, 2026.

We are on a collision course to cause irreparable harm to the Peoples Park: Queen's Park North.

Too much program harmful to Queen's Park North is proposed in the concept plan and design directive found in Appendix 3 and 4 of the staff report.

- The 3 m high tree walk must be eliminated, to prevent irreparable harm to the old growth forest.
- The washrooms must be relocated from the centre of QPN to the periphery for safety reasons.
- The restaurant or preferably a kiosk should be minimal in size--not 3000 sq ft or 270 sq m-- and located on the periphery to avoid continual traffic of service vehicles, damage to trees and intrusive infrastructure required to operate the facility.

City Council oversight and decisions about this important and iconic public property is being delegated to city staff although the consultation process is incomplete.

The proposed program elements must be examined and fully assessed prior to finalizing the design and advancing contract drawings and construction details. The community has continually voiced concerns regarding irreparable damage that will occur to old growth trees, mature tree canopy and heritage resources.

Notwithstanding continuing objections, the concept design and extensive construction program remains in place. More is added at every meeting.

At a recent meeting staff were asked whether any element of the concept plan could be eliminated should it be found that damage would be caused to the old growth forest - yes, no or maybe. After some hedging we heard the design would be 'refined' - then stated that the answer was no. In other words nothing will be eliminated.

The program is set in stone and the community consultation process has been disingenuous with a predetermined outcome, anything but democratic. How can this be for the Peoples Park?

Why is this happening? Planning for this park is informed by City policy for all parks - Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Parkland Strategy and TOcore. We were told that intensification and growth in the downtown core creates the need for additional park amenity space and increased use of existing parks. The reports do not differentiate priorities between local parks and special parks that are grounded in heritage. The reports do not recognize that Queen's Park is a profound historical, cultural, ecologically significant area with old growth forest and mature tree canopy. It is an historic public asset with its own distinctive sense of place and character.

Placemaking activities and additional amenities are being introduced. In this instance, in this park, placekeeping, not placemaking should be the directive.

Add to this, the speed at which the project is moving to construction documentation in literally weeks, before consultation is complete clearly indicates that the plans were already in place before they were fully revealed to the community.

I want to express gratitude to the Weston Foundation for their very generous philanthropic pledge to revitalize Queen's Park North. This donation represents a significant and welcome opportunity to secure the future of Queen's Park North.

I do not believe it is the intent of the Weston Foundation to cause the demise of a cherished public space. Yet the engagement process, described as transparent and Park Policy providing direction to Parks staff will result in irreparable harm.

Along with others, I urge the Executive Committee to:

1. Request that City Council direct the General Manager of Parks and Recreation to bring a draft concept plan to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee for consideration only after the program has been fully assessed and after satisfactory consultation with the community.
2. Request that City Council direct the General Manager of Parks and Recreation to continue through design development to finalize the design with community input through public engagement and bring the final design to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee for approval prior to implementation.

The future of the People's Park is in your hands.

Elizabeth Sisam

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