

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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To Executive Committee

Item EX29.3

Dear Councillors:

March 6, 2024.

This letter is simply to alert you to an extraordinary public meeting that was held last night on the unveiling of plans for Queen's Park North.

Of the 40 members of the public who attended at the Grosvenor Y, and a like number who attended online, not one person approved of the plans being advanced by the design team and City Staff. Not one.

As presented, the plans include a treewalk, a maze, a fountain and reflecting pool, two buildings (including 270 msg. 3000 sq. ft cafe restaurant) various localized special gardens, tea, tapestry, play, rose, fountain, service and reflection. By the time they are done, Queen's Park North as we know it, a place of forest, nature and respite, will have disappeared.

When staff was asked whether elements of the plan might be eliminated, they once again did not answer, although every indication we have had from them in every meeting we have attended is this is the plan that they now support and will approve.

If staff recommendations are accepted as written, as of council at the end of this month, the staff will have complete authority to enter into contracts, to approve a plan, to hire help without tender, and City Council and the public will have nothing to say in the matter.

We understand this is business as usual for Parks, but this is a park with a difference;

It is a park in a heritage setting, it stands along the shoulder of provincial government, it contains a stand of 275-year-old oak trees, trees that were mature when John Graves Simcoe's soldiers paddled into Toronto Harbour. Most important, it is a park where 45 people braved a cold spring rain in hopes a city plan might bear some resemblance to their aspirations. Clearly this does not.

We join Ceta Ramkhalawansingh in requesting a deferral so the City and community can stop the train and consider what we are doing. Otherwise, we are headlong into a change that few will support and many will grieve—to meet a deadlines that are totally arbitrary.

With thanks,

Sue Dexter,

Board, Harbord Village Residents' Association

Independent forestry professionals are concerned about damage to the 275 year old oak savannah which lies directly in the path of the tree walk, a 9 metre high mechanical intrusion spanning about a quarter of the park.

Tree Walk | A view looking north

Tree Walk

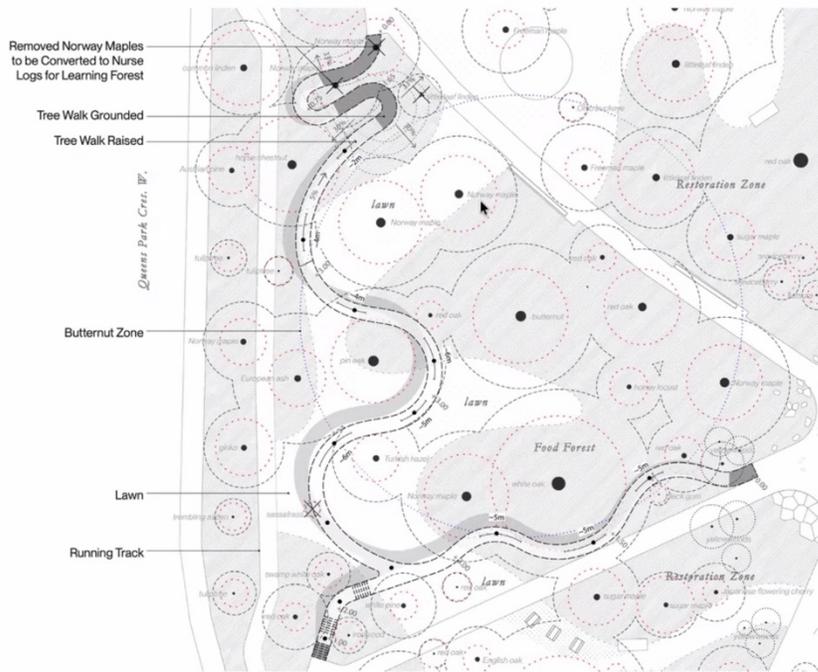
The Tree Walk is envisioned as accessible journey from end to end, rising with accessible slopes of 5% or less. Visitors will walk above the delicate understory that has been introduced to protect a particularly special stand of mature native trees.

Park visitors will be able to walk underneath in a meandering lawn that skirts the food forest. A temporary or permanent low fence will delineate the understory zone.

Winter operations are an important consideration. The team is looking at how to keep the feature safe and accessible all year round.



Tree Walk | Impact diagram



Tree Walk Tree Impact

The team is studying how the structure and path can meander within the existing trees without impacting Tree Protection Zones.

The northern entrance could have an earthwork berm that would support the path switchbacks and reduce confined spaces below. Two existing Norway Maples would be impacted, becoming nurse logs for the Learning Forest.

Structural spans will depend on detailed design, but the illustrated range has been discussed with a structural engineer.

Air spading by a certified Arborist will occur in advance of helical pile installation to confirm no major root injuries will occur.

- tree for transplant
 - ✕ removed tree
 - ⊙ tree protection zone (TPZ)
 - Tree Walk Grounded
 - ▨ understory
 - support column
- ⊕ N 10m

In addition, there are many other interventions: a maze, a fountain and reflecting pool, two buildings (including 270 msg. 3000 sq. ft cafe restaurant) various localized special gardens, tea, tapestry, play, rose, fountain, service and reflection. By the time they are done, Queen’s Park North as we know it, a place of forest, nature and respite, will have disappeared.

Commemorative Garden | Garden Plan

Commemorative Garden

Hilary Weston was Lieutenant Governor of Ontario from 1997 to 2002. From the window of her office in the Legislature building, she admired the natural beauty of Queen's Park. Mrs Weston has long been an admirer and advocate for Canadian gardens and parks, writing books on the variety and beauty of the Canadian landscape. In her public service role, she was known for her support of women and volunteers, her progressive outlook and generous spirit.

Her warmth, elegance, and imaginative character will be reflected in the welcoming and unique experience of the Commemorative Garden in Queens Park North; a place for exploration, respite and enjoyment for all.

Queen's Park North Phase 3 Workshop 2026-03-05 34 / 78 JRS