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Scadding Court planning major site makeover

By **Dennis Hanagan**

A mid-March architect's report will suggest ways to improve Scadding Court Community Centre, the Sanderson library next door, and perhaps boost the neighbourhood economy at the same time.



"We want to make this an exciting place that people want to come to," says Alina Chatterjee, director of development and community engagement at west Downtown destination, which first opened 33 years ago.

The Ontario College of Art and Design and Toronto Western Hospital are expected to be part of the new development which Chatterjee hopes will bring an "economic revival" to the area.

Earlier this year the centre held two community consultation meetings where residents spoke about what they'd like to see in the redevelopment.

College St. architectural firm Levitt Goodman—which recently won a design award for the Native Child and Family Services centre, also on College—is expected to give "a pretty technical report" by mid-March, says Chatterjee.

The report will look at space needs for services and programs, zoning, parking and traffic, improving the centre's community garden, timelines for redevelopment, and better access for the disabled.

People at the consultation meetings demanded more space for SCCC programs. Chatterjee says the centre is "at capacity. There's nothing that isn't completely fully-used at all times."

She says people "really felt strongly" about better access for the disabled considering they currently have to go all the way to Variety Village in Scarborough for programs.

They also expressed concern about Alexandra Park, which used to be the estate of Polish engineer Sir Casimir Gzowski in the 1800's. Because of potential hiding places, the park "needs to be safer and more welcoming," says Chatterjee.

People said the current centre is poorly designed, the entrance should be easier to find, and there's confusion about how to get to activity rooms once inside.

SCCC is speaking with the Ontario College of Art and Design and nearby Toronto Western Hospital about collaborating on the redevelopment. "We want to know how we get the most impact with the resources we have now," says Chatterjee.

Peter Caldwell, vice-president of OCAD's finance and administration, says the college is under pressure to expand. "We have an extreme space shortage and we're looking for ways to alleviate that. We're very enthusiastic" about being part of SCCC's redevelopment, he adds.

He sees the college having about 150,000 square feet on the site with no encroachment on Alexandra Park itself. "The park is sacred. There's no proposal to infringe on the park at all."

Justine Jackson, senior vice-president and chief financial officer of the University Health Network, says Toronto Western is "contemplating leasing space in the redevelopment" to provide clinic-based health care services.

Once the report has been released, stakeholders will face the challenge of funding the redevelopment—at this point, they do not know how much will it cost or where will the money come from. "That's when the rubber will hit the road," says Chatterjee.

To view or comment on the plans or make suggestions, visit www.scaddingcourt.org/redevelopmentdetails.

2011-02-27 18:49:02

By **THE Bulletin**
Downtown Toronto