



## John Street vision in Weston moves forward with redevelopment plan

**Cultural hub, improved farmers' market, residential buildings in the works**

*York Guardian*

Plans for a new cultural hub and improved farmers' market in Weston are underway with hopes to get shovels in the ground by 2015.

City planning staff is expected to review the redevelopment application put forward by Rockport Group shortly, said Frances Nunziata, York South-Weston councillor, who held a meeting recently to update the community on the proposed plans.

"Feedback was largely positive," said Nunziata, noting nearly 100 community members attended the meeting and got to see Rockport's architectural drawings to redevelop the Toronto Parking Authority (TPA) lot on John Street.

It includes building a 8,557-square-foot cultural hub consisting of artist live-work studios as well as the re-visioned Weston Farmers' Market to be integrated with the proposed residential development that includes an 18-storey building and three-storey townhouses.

Nunziata noted that many of the ideas to redevelop the land came out of the Weston Design Charette held three years ago when former city chief planner Paul Bedford helped develop potential plans for Weston. Community members were also solicited for feedback and ideas at that time.

Nunziata added that the vacant site next to the TPA lot, which was privately owned, had recently been expropriated by the city, allowing the process to redevelop the area to continue.

"It was an eyesore for the community for many, many years," she said.

Artscape has also been involved with the design process. The non-profit organization has previously worked on such projects as the Wychwood Barns and the Parkdale Arts & Cultural Centre.

Nunziata said she hoped a steering committee consisting of residents will be formed soon to work alongside Artscape.

David McBride, chair of the Weston Village Residents' Association, said he was quite pleased with what they were shown.

"This has been an ongoing thing for a number of years. There was a lot of dialogue for the past six or seven years," McBride said. "It's really a win-win situation for Weston."

He hoped more people in the community will get involved and contribute to the process.

"I think this is a really good start," McBride said. "More we can get it out there, the better. There's lots of work to go still."



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