

ByWard Market revitalization plan to be tabled June 1, 2015

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City staff will present recommendations on how to revitalize the ByWard Market on June 8. Hints of the recommendations have been offered to members of the Market Core Team members, made up of representatives of the Lowertown Community Association, the Market BIA and other stakeholders. Short term recommendations include the creation of a municipal corporation to manage the ByWard Market and to invest in it, the renovation and repurposing of the Market Building into a fresh produce market and the landscaping of the streets adjacent to the Market Building. Longer term recommendations include replacing the parking on York with outdoor stalls and replacing the garage building with a smaller commercial building, to make room for a public square facing the Market Building, with an underground garage.

Now is the time to ensure our elected officials' commitment to a revitalized ByWard Market, a showcase attraction of our Nation's Capital that would also meet the needs of residents. The good news is that the Market has been included in the proposed 2015-2018 Term of Council Priorities report and will be considered for approval by City Council at the July 8 meeting. Once approved, these priorities become the basis of the City's Strategic Plan, and thus have access to funding. While it is encouraging that our Market is on the way to be deemed a priority, so far only \$1 million has been committed. This is a wholly inadequate pittance, which would not suffice to implement a fraction of the comprehensive and exciting revitalization plan - certainly not before the 2017 anniversary celebrations of Canada's 150 birthday.

In addition, the federal government has recently announced the \$210 million Canada 150 Fund to help municipalities over the next four years with projects that would enhance the sesquicentennial celebrations. The City of Ottawa has included the ByWard Market, lumped together with the Parkdale Market on its long list of worthy community projects. While a start, this is again insufficient: the list includes \$2 million for Manotick's Arena, \$3 million for Kanata's recreation complex and then just \$400,000 for both ByWard and Parkdale Markets.

Resident or tourist, if you walk down from the Hill on the York Street steps to the Market, you leave behind the beauty of the Major's Hill park, the sculptures and the iconic staircase - to face the parking lot of York St. "It's uninviting, you feel unsafe crossing in the middle of the street, weaving between turning and parked cars in the middle island, and you don't even know where to walk. That's the entry to the Market from the grand steps?" asks a resident whose daily walk takes her through the market.

Project for Public Spaces, the New York-based consultants hired by the City at the start of this process, noted that “we don’t have a parking lot in the middle of a market - we have a market in the middle of a parking lot.”

Now that residents, business representatives, city council and staff alike agree with the vision and have developed a plan, the City must put its money where its mouth is to fully fund it, if we want to invite the world to Ottawa in a world class Market that showcases public plazas, not parking lots.

Join us this year as we ask City investment in our market and our community. Contact your local councillor to request funding for our Market! email: mathieu.fleury@ottawa.ca, Twitter: @Mathieufleury