

# NEWS

## \$970,000 approved for sidewalk repair

Residents to raise funds for trees and wider walkway

By KRIS SCHEUER

The Harbord Village Residents Association (HVRA) hosted another meeting to update people on a project for beautification on College Street. The mid-May meeting at the Bloor JCC was packed with residents, city planners, Councillor Olivia Chow (Trinity/Spadina) and architects Brown & Storey, who were hired by the HVRA for \$1 to design a proposal. Residents talked about wanting to achieve a balance of people, cars and cyclists along the strip.

Architect James Brown outlined the plans for the "section from Bathurst to Spadina. This template could be expanded east to west. More road capacity, that is what's needed. Extra capacity that is what we are looking at [by removing one lane of traffic]. We are narrowing the road, but expanding the sidewalk. We can add 150 new trees and expand the sidewalk by three metres," he said to applause by residents. "We are thinking of countless conditions and sites that could be built later to celebrate our community," he added.

If a lane of traffic were removed, the sidewalk was widened and trees were added, the city would have to look at various issues including how that would affect hydro, existing trees, water drainage, street lighting and traffic.

This proposal incorporates what the residents would like to see happen, but this plan includes more money than they have in their budget. Last year, the city set aside money for sidewalk repairs along that strip of College Street. Repairs have been put on hold while the group held more meetings and decided what could be done

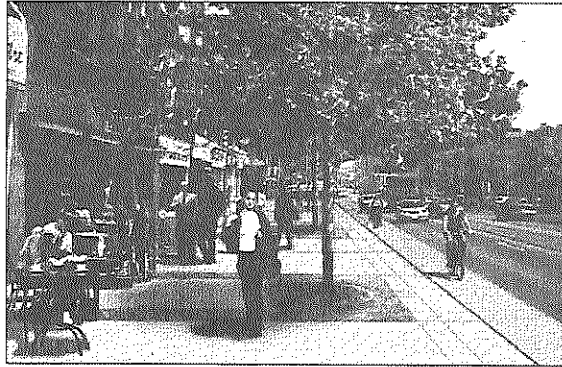
besides just repairs. At a meeting in April, they wanted to look at different options before deciding and that is how the proposal, presented on May 15, came about.

"There is a budget item that has been approved of \$970,000,"

Chow told the group. She said, if they went ahead with repairs they could ask council for something grander later. While they may not get anymore, there is no harm in asking, she told them.

Chow asked for a vote on repairing the sidewalk this year and then looking at implementing the Brown & Storey architectural proposal in the future. That was passed unanimously.

The architects worked on the proposal for only a dollar because they wanted to help the community, which



This is how College St. would look with wider sidewalks.

PHOTO COURTESY BROWN & STOREY

they live in as well, Brown told the *Gleaner*. "The 150 trees are a large addition not only locally, but a dramatic transformation for the city," says the architect. Beautifying this area and expanding the sidewalk "could create new industry and growth possibilities for residents and businesses."

The next step is that Urban Planning will do a report, look into a traffic study and find out how much it would cost to do sidewalk repairs this year or next, concluded Chow.

### College Street could be next Queen St. W

If the beautification proposal on College Street is adopted, it could make the strip really vibrant, Councillor Olivia Chow told the *Gleaner*.

"Residents are willing to sacrifice one lane of traffic to be able to extend the sidewalk. This will bring vibrancy to the street - like another Queen Street West where people will love to walk. If we could get the city to cost share or pay for widening of the sidewalk, it's a win-win situation.

"Just look at Queen Street West [between University and Spadina]...its been a hugely successful area and I hope we can do the same on College Street."

To get this project off the ground, which also includes adding 150 trees, "the community needs to generate excitement and the neighbourhood, the city, government, businesses and Torontonians need to get on board to bring excitement to this project."