



Hub photo

Richardson is seen Tuesday displaying artist's drawing of the planned riverbank park.

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## Park project exemplifies Riverview's new direction

By Peter R. Boisseau  
Staff Reporter

Riverview council unveiled a plan Tuesday for a \$100,000 park development project and predicted it will be completed this year.

"This year is a giant step forward," beamed Mayor David Richardson at a news conference, posing with an artist's conception of what the park will look like after benches, walking trails and a water fountain are installed.

The plan covers a three-acre section of town-owned riverbank property just east of the tourist bureau. The town committed \$40,000 to the project earlier and hopes to raise the remaining \$60,000 from local service clubs, the provincial and federal governments.

It is by far the most ambitious project undertaken by the Riverfront Beautification Committee, which has worked quietly during its four-year existence, said Coun. Jerry O'Rourke.

Noticeably absent from the background in the artist's depiction of the parkland is the mountain of garbage that marks Moncton's dump, long a sore point between the two communities.

The dump, which Richardson jokingly calls Mount Rideout in reference to Moncton's mayor, should only be an ugly memory within a few years.

A committee involving the area municipalities and the province is looking for a regional landfill site and the City of Moncton has committed funds to landscape the dump as it is phased out, Richardson noted.

The riverfront project is also part of a much larger facelift council wants to give the town.

"Riverview can't stay a bedroom community," said Richardson, echoing what has become his favorite theme since coming into office last year. He said the town has "embarked on additional projects to upgrade Riverview's identity."

Chief among council's schemes is a \$35,000 downtown development study expected to be completed soon. A few selectively chosen details of the study's

initial findings were released last week, but Richardson only teased reporters about what is yet to come.

"You just won't believe what's been going on in our community, and when we release this study, you'll know what hasn't been going on in our community too."

Among the study facts released last week was that 71 cents out of every dollar town resident's spent on merchandise went outside Riverview, a figure the consultants say is shockingly high and "could easily be brought down to 50 per cent," Richardson said.

More than anything, the study is meant to give investors confidence. The theory is that any sign of a thaw in the sometimes frigid reception given commercial development in Riverview will make businesses eager to locate there.

In addition, council wants to move away from the spot zoning which has plagued town development and fuelled bitter confrontations between residents and businesses.

"The study will open up a lot of people's eyes," to the potential of Riverview. "Before this, nobody wanted to do anything but complain," said Richardson.

Also in the wings is a push for city status. "It could be an important psychological tool to help us grow." Though its on hold until downtown and riverbank development take seed, "it may come up again in six months' time," grinned Richardson, who's been alternately praised and criticized for his grand plans for Riverview.

Almost forgotten in the recent publicity over the downtown plans is the town's former industrial park, which failed to attract a single tenant in its seven-year existence.

Riverview acquired the land for \$250,000 but has yet to announce what it plans to do with it, despite hinting for the past year that at least four proposals from private developers are being considered.

Richardson still had little to say about the industrial park. "These kind of things take time."