

Gorky Park May Get \$1 Billion Makeover

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Gorky Park, known abroad from the novel of the same name and film starring William Hurt, may get a \$1 billion "patriotic" upgrade to replace aging rides and infrastructure, according to a City Hall proposal.

"The reconstruction of the Russian capital's central park may be a vivid ideological element in forming Russia's national idea," according to a draft of the proposal provided by the city's expert investment council. The refurbished park will "reflect national values, Russia's history and pivotal achievements such as space exploration."

The park, which covers more than 100 hectares along the Moscow River, has been open since 1928. It came to international attention as the title of Martin Cruz Smith's 1981 crime novel and the subsequent 1983 film. The heavy metal band Scorpions mention the park in their song "Wind of Change," which is about Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The city's proposal foresees construction of an art village, bike paths, facilities for horse riding, restaurants and carnival rides. Landmarks such as the Stalin-era fountain in the

middle of the park will be preserved.

The refurbished park will emphasize Russian culture, and its vendors will serve only Russian food, said Mikhail Khubutia, head of the city's expert investment council and an adviser to Mayor Yury Luzhkov. "We're taking a very patriotic approach to this project," he said.

Council members toured parks in Scandinavia, South Korea and France looking for ideas, and they have invited officials from Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens to Moscow for consultations.

"Tivoli is a big achievement for Copenhagen," Khubutia said. "People of all ages, rich and poor and middle-class come to the park. It's wonderful."

The city hopes to double visitors to Gorky Park to 6 million a year, said Vyacheslav Korol, the park's director.

"It won't be Disneyland," Korol said. "It will have an extensive educational component, with lectures, art exhibitions, festivals and concerts."

Construction will take three to five years to complete, Korol said. The city government is expected to vote on the proposal this year, and construction may start in 2011, Khubutia said.

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