

Pushkin Square Getting a Makeover

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New Pushkin Square will be remodeled by the winner of a tender by City Hall.

City Hall is seeking a developer for the redevelopment and the reconstruction of Pushkin Square, one of the capital's most famous public spaces and a gathering point for protesters.

The budget for the tender listed by the authorities on a state tenders' portal last week is 20.3 million rubles (\$669,000) and relates to Pushkin Square and New Pushkin Square, RIA-Novosti reported.

Both areas lie off Tverskaya Ulitsa, the city's main street. Pushkin Square, built after World War II, has a statue of Russia's most famous poet. New Pushkin Square stands opposite, on the other side Tverskaya Ulitsa and was built in 1977.

The locations have fountains and granite ornamentation, flower beds and . The tender document states that both squares, which cover a combined area of 22.3 hectares, are currently in an "unsatisfactory" condition.

Most recently, Pushkin Square was used as the starting point for a 10,000-strong protest march Sunday. Its fountains were also made famous in March when opposition leaders Alexei Navalny and Sergei Udaltsov and their supporters forced riot police to break up human chains they had formed around the boarded-up waterworks during a demonstration after the presidential election win of then-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

The reconstruction and renovation project involves the development of a plan for the squares, decorative paving, landscaping of the green spaces and flower beds. The documents released on Friday stipulate that paving stones and sidewalks must be laid in granite.

Triumfalnaya Ploshchad, another popular site for opposition protests, further along Tverskaya Ulitsa from Pushkin Square, was fenced off in 2010 for building work linked to City Hall's plan to build extensive underground parking facilities in the area. That work is still underway.

Bids in the tender for the Pushkin Square and New Pushkin Square redevelopment will be accepted until June 13, and the results will be announced two days later. A reconstruction plan is expected to be developed by Oct. 20.

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