

should be finished this time next year.

With James Gordon Meek
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Bryant Park getting cooler with ice rink

IT'S BEEN ONE of the city's premier spots for people-watching and the center stage of high fashion, but now Bryant Park is set to become an ice skater's wonderland.

City parks officials are set to announce tomorrow that a temporary Olympic-sized ice rink will be built in the famed midtown oasis.

And the best news of all is that admission is supposed to be free.

Rangers greats Adam Graves and Rod Gilbert, and former Olympic figure-skating champ Dick Button, are expected to be on hand for tomorrow's ceremony.

Officials at the Parks Department and the Bryant Park Restoration Corp. hope to have the new rink up and running by next month.

New York Public Library officials had been concerned that the rink would threaten a book storage area under the park. But yesterday they said their worries had been put to rest.

"The concerns we've raised are being addressed and we know that Bryant Park, with its views of the library's Beaux-Arts facade, will provide a beautiful setting for skating this winter," library officials said in a statement.

The Texas-based company IceRinkEvents.com has been hired to construct the rink. The company has built ice rinks for the World Figure Skating Championships, and for National Hockey League teams, including the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Plans for the ice rink, to be located on the 42nd St. side of the 6-acre park between Fifth and Sixth Aves., have been in the works since last winter.

The rink will be open until the end of January so that it doesn't interfere with mid-February's Fashion Week at the park, according to published reports.

Bill Hutchinson