

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Meeting #2/19, Friday, February 22, 2019

FROM: Chandra Sharma, Director, Community Engagement and Outreach

RE: **HUMBER BAY PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

KEY ISSUE

City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Capital Planning Team have been supported by the TRCA in the recent development of an updated Humber Bay Parks Master Plan (2018).

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS as exemplified in the Waterfront Agreement of October 11, 1972 the City of Toronto and TRCA are to create and develop waterfront lands which will enable public access to water oriented recreational facilities.

AND WHEREAS TRCA staff worked with City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff to prepare the Humber Bay Park Master Plan.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Humber Bay Master Plan 2019 be received by TRCA Board of Directors for information;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to work with the City of Toronto to advance and initiate projects to implement Master Plan priorities.

BACKGROUND

A Changing Waterfront

Opened in 1984, the 43-hectare Humber Bay Park is owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and operated by the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division. The park is located south west of the intersection of Parklawn Avenue, Lake Shore Boulevard West and Marine Parade Drive. Humber Bay Park was created through lakefilling during the 1970s and early 1980s. The landmass was gradually formed from construction fill in the mid-to late 80's. Part of the Mimico Creek watershed, the park exists as two large peninsulas that flank the mouth of Mimico Creek where it discharges into Lake Ontario. Although the landmass of Humber Bay Park is entirely man-made, it has become a naturalized green space that contains a diversity of vegetation communities that provide important habitat for seasonal resident wildlife species and migrating species (e.g. stopover habitat for birds).

The original master plan for this new land called for a highly programmed park space. However, over time, the park has evolved into a natural and quiet refuge for both people and wildlife. Located in close proximity to a well-established residential community and an evolving high rise neighbourhood, the park and its infrastructure are under new pressure to meet the demands of an increasing population, while maintaining their highly valued naturalized character.

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The park has been the subject of a series of master plans for site specific areas in the vicinity including Humber Bay Park East, Humber Bay Park West, Humber Bay Shores Park. This updated master plan would be the first that consolidates all of the site specific plans and addresses the park in its complete physical formation.

Ongoing Development

Currently, there is considerable development taking place adjacent to the park within the existing community. The number of residents in this area has significantly increased over the last 5 years with numerous towers being developed along Lake Shore Boulevard, Park Lawn Road and Marine Parade Drive. The Humber Bay & Humber Bay Shores area is one of the fastest growing new communities in Toronto, with approximately 12,000 current residents and an anticipated 10,000 more residents by 2020. New development has attracted a new demographic of residents to the area. As such, there has been keen interest in the redevelopment of the public realm of this new high density node adjacent to Humber Bay Park. The recent redevelopment of the public realm along Marine Parade Drive, directly adjacent to Humber Bay Park is an important influencing factor. Previous implemented projects include the redevelopment of Humber Bay Shores Park and the Butterfly Garden and Trail Improvements which will be completed in 2018.

The Revitalized Master Plan

Humber Bay Park, with its system of trails, rugged shoreline and dramatic views, offers a unique and rare waterfront experience within the larger metropolitan Toronto area. Defined by two separate peninsulas, the park is comprised of a collection of spaces, each with its own distinct character, function, form and sense of place. The park has been loved by the community for decades and is now showing signs of wear and tear, deterioration and decay.

The vision for Humber Bay Park is one of greater integration. The Revitalized Master Plan proposes a new comprehensive design approach that will enhance the valued naturalized landscape, habitat and recreational uses in the park, while identifying new opportunities for improvements that will respond to both the existing and future needs of the community. The proposed plan is based on the following guiding principles:

- The design will celebrate and enhance the existing natural beauty and sense of respite from the urban city, while accommodating the growing number of park users and addressing existing user conflicts.
- The existing flora and fauna of value be protected, while providing opportunities for interpretation and appreciation of the park's natural heritage attributes.
- The park continues to be a local park for nearby residents while embracing its place in the larger network of open spaces along Toronto's waterfront. The park should accommodate a diversity of park users and needs.
- The design capitalizes upon new opportunities for recreational activities and new programmable social spaces while maintaining and protecting the natural and ecological attributes of the park.
- The design is flexible, resilient, adaptive and able to evolve and respond to the current needs as well as the future needs of the community.

This Master Plan strives to provide a new perspective, one that will achieve a strong vision that will balance the preservation and enhancement of while identifying areas for improvement, establishing a larger framework that will unify and protect areas of the park. This vision is based on the following objectives:

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1. Improve overall connectivity, unifying the overall park, establishing a hierarchy of routes, trails and pathways that meet AODA criteria. The design involves adjusting the existing layout, eliminating areas of conflict between cyclists and pedestrians and creating new connections with the goal of improving pedestrian and cyclist movement.
2. Improve parking and vehicular circulation in order to address existing and future parking requirements, while reducing the extent of paved surfaces and the quantity of storm water run-off.
3. Protect and enhance existing natural environment by creating new aquatic and terrestrial habitat areas that enhance biodiversity and ecological functions.
4. Improve water quality and function of the ponds and water channel to support ecological and recreational functions while reducing the resources required for maintenance and operation.
5. Identify opportunities for improved park programming, including redefining existing spaces and the introduction of new seating and lookouts, while protecting sensitive habitats. Park programming is intended to be flexible, catering to the adjacent growing community.
6. Integrate architectural improvements within Humber Bay Park with adjacent landscape, to meet ecological, regulatory and overall site enhancement objectives.
7. Improve the lighting strategy, to ensure public safety, while achieving the highest standard of habitat protection, the reduction of light pollution and enhanced energy efficiency.

Public Consultation Process

Public Meetings:

As part of the master planning process, members of the public were invited to 3 public meetings. The input from these informal sessions was used to establish immediate and long-term objectives for the park.

Community Resource Group:

The Community Resource Group (CRG) was established to provide input, guidance and advice during the design phase of the Project. The CRG met 5 times over the course of the project.

Additional Consultation Comments and suggestions about the content of the Master Plan were welcomed throughout the process. Questionnaires were distributed at public meetings and surveys were available on the City's project website, affording additional opportunities for input.

Architectural Community Resource Group Meetings:

The Architectural Community Resource Group (ACRG) was convened on 3 occasions and 2 public meetings were held for the Humber Bay Park East Building Project. The public consultation for the new building in Humber Bay Park East was conducted in coordination with the Master Plan.

Each of the public meetings was well attended and resulted in important discussions regarding the parks assets, issues and opportunities. Various components of the Master Plan were presented at each meeting and were all generally supported by the public. For a more fulsome overview of the public consultation and the comments received from the public, see Attachment 1 to this report.

RATIONALE

The revitalization and update of the Humber Bay Park Master Plan exemplifies the partnership and process set out in the 1972 Waterfront Agreement where: *“In the course of implementing the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Waterfront Plan the Authority has been and will be acquiring, creating and developing waterfront lands which will enable public access to water oriented recreational facilities. Metro will contribute to such acquisition, creation and development. Metro is desirous of using the lands so acquired, created or developed within the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto for park and recreational purposes.”*

FINANCIAL DETAILS

At its meeting on February 17, 2016, City Council approved the 2016 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Capital Budget which included a project budget of \$7.0 million for a new building located within Humber Bay Park East. TRCA staff participated throughout the Master Plan process through funding provided through City of Toronto municipal levy. Cost estimates for the build out of various components of the Master Plan will be undertaken in 2019 and will be reported back to the Board of Directors.

Implementation of individual projects is contingent on TRCA and City priorities, approvals, additional consultation process (if required), funding and budget approvals from the City and its partners. Potential funding or implementation partners have been identified for each project. These include TRCA, City departments, other public agencies and private or volunteer organizations.

The Master Plan process identified a preferred location for this building located centrally within the park, near the reconfigured ponds with direct access to parking and drop-off. Architectural services for design of this building were retained and design development is in progress. A Request for Proposals for detailed design of the associated pond reconfiguration has been initiated by the City of Toronto. Specific timelines for final design and construction are being discussed and will be coordinated with TRCA. It is proposed that the maintenance of any newly created naturalized areas will be managed by TRCA.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Master Plan Implementation

The projects identified for implementation in the Master Plan are divided into three categories: small-scale or incremental projects, medium-scale projects and large-scale projects.

Small-scale or incremental projects - These are improvements that are not site specific and that can be implemented strategically over time throughout the entire park. Some of these projects have previously been identified by the TRCA and /or the City and could be funded through Parks and Capital Projects annual Parks Plan and state of good repair budgets.

Medium-scale projects - These projects are those that will require project-specific funding as well as some coordination to ensure that they are staged to have minimal impact on the operation of the park. Cost sharing, partnership funding or resource sharing for implementation of these projects may be required.

Large-scale projects - These improvements include most of the Master Plan's most significant and substantial recommendations. These projects will go the furthest in defining the future character of Humber Bay Park and include the implementation of the redefined West Market

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Area, the Humber Bay Park East Building Project and the Ponds & Linear Wetland Reconfiguration and Improvements, among others. These projects would require significant funding and coordination.

TRCA will also continue to work with the City to identify the opportunities where implementation can be performed by TRCA staff. This implementation work could be accomplished through our existing Service Agreements with the City.

City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation and TRCA will be working together to find where economies of scale can be achieved, such as ensuring related projects are implemented in close succession, reducing the duration of disturbance within the Park, and minimizing costs for mobilization, materials and labour. The Master Plan identifies projects that could benefit from concurrent implementation.

Report prepared by: Nancy Gaffney, extension 5313 and Jill Attwood, extension 5916

Emails: nancy.gaffney@trca.on.ca and jill.attwood@trca.on.ca

For Information contact: Jill Attwood, extension 5916

Emails: jill.attwood@trca.on.ca

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Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: Humber Bay Park Master Plan (attachment to be provided with added agenda)