

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

October 14, 2005

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Subject: Western Beaches Watercourse – Potential for Staging Other Major Events;
Operating Budget Impact; Opportunities to Extend the Course to its Full 1,000
Metre Length
Ward 14 Parkdale-High Park

Purpose:

To provide City Council with information regarding the operation and potential expansion of the Western Beaches Watercourse.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting in the adoption of this report in 2005 or 2006.

If expansion of the Western Beaches Watercourse is deemed a capital priority, a project estimated at \$20 million must be included in a future year capital budget request. It is likely that at least a portion of this request would be funded by City debt. An extension of the Western Beaches Watercourse is not currently included in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Revised Capital 5-Year Plan.

At this time, the future operating cost implications are expected to be minimal and restricted to additional administrative costs associated with permitting of the facility. Any permits for major events would be subject to fees that would recover all associated costs. These fees would be negotiated individually for each event and would vary depending on the scope of the event and the estimated costs for staff, equipment and other City resources required to stage it and restore the site afterwards.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Terms of Reference for the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee, as contained in Attachment 1, be approved; and
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting on June 14, 15 and 16, 2005, City Council adopted Clause 5 contained in Staff Report No. 6 (dated May 18, 2005 from Fareed M. Amin, Deputy City Manager) of the Policy and Finance Committee, headed Construction, Ownership and Operation of the Western Beaches Watercourse.

Recommendation 4 of the staff report requested that “staff from Toronto Water and the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division report on the future operating cost implications of the Western Beaches Watercourse prior to the 2006 Budget Submission”.

City Council also amended Clause 5 by adding the following:

“That the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation be requested to:

- (1) examine, in conjunction with other officials, including staff from Exhibition Place and Ontario Place, the potential of staging other major events at or near this location, including Wakestock; and
- (2) report back to Council, through Economic Development and Parks Committee, in the fall of 2005 on the opportunities to extend the course to its full 1,000 metre length.”

Comments:

Potential of Staging other Major Events, including Wakestock:

The Western Beaches Watercourse (WBW) will expand the area of flat water that is currently provided behind the existing breakwall at this location by building a new breakwall. Over its 600 metre length, the width of flat water will increase from approximately 75 metres to 135 metres.

The new Watercourse will allow Toronto to host the IDBF (International Dragon Boat Federation) Club Crew World Championships (CCWC) in August 2006 as it will meet the

standards for this event set out by the IDBF. In addition, the new course meets the standards for the IDBF CORCOM (Corporate) World Championships and several international festivals.

The Western Beaches Watercourse will also provide training facilities for dragon boat racing, rowing, canoeing, and other watersports at both the elite and community level. There is the potential to develop new programs in a variety of watersports for all ages at this facility.

Though the Western Beaches Watercourse will provide an area of flat water that meets minimum standards for some IDBF events, the standards for the majority of international rowing and canoeing regattas require course lengths of 1,150 metres (1,000 metres for racing plus start/finish areas) and 2,150 metres. The Western Beaches Watercourse will not have the ability to host events such as the IDBF World Championships and the FISA (Rowing) World Championships.

The FISA Masters Championship Rowing Regatta courses require a minimum 1,150 metre course. The Argonaut Rowing Club has advised Rowing Canada that they are interested in hosting the 2010 World Rowing Masters Regatta (WRMR). Other levels of government and corporate sponsors could be approached to fund an extension to the new watercourse if Toronto is selected as the Canadian entry in the bid to host this international championship.

Wakestock:

Wakestock is an annual wakeboarding event managed by private event organizers which targets a youth audience. Wakeboarding is a relatively new boardsport, created from a combination of water skiing, snow boarding and surfing techniques. As in water skiing, the rider is towed behind a motor boat, or a cable skiing setup, but typically at slower speeds (25 – 40 kilometres per hour). In August 2005, the event was held for the first time on Long Pond, Toronto Islands. Feedback received from the event was positive with no offences reported and the event was in full compliance with environmental, crowd management, and noise guidelines. Wakestock 2005 generated an estimated \$6 million in revenues to the City.

Technically, the new course will be large enough to accommodate wakeboarding events such as Wakestock. However, the potential of staging other major events at or near this location, including Wakestock, will be affected by considerations other than strictly technical ones.

Firstly, event organizers will have to want to stage their events here. To date, the Wakestock organizers preference is to remain in the same location where they staged their very successful 2005 event. If held the same time in 2006 as with 2005, the event would be held at the same time as the IDBF Club Crew World Championships.

Secondly, any closures to navigable waters are regulated by the Toronto Port Authority (TPA) and would require their consent. The Toronto Port Authority have indicated that they will work cooperatively with the City of Toronto, similarly to the way they work with the City to manage events on Long Pond; ensuring that proper safety plans are filed, insurance is in place, proper notices are issued and signs posted, and police are present for all closures.

Thirdly, guiding principles must be developed about the kinds and frequency of events that could be staged here and the impact they would have on other stakeholders in the vicinity, including community residents, Western Beach organizations and businesses and regular “flat water” users including dragon boaters, sailors, canoeists and rowers.

The current “flat water” area behind the existing breakwall extends from Ontario Place to the Humber River. Its use is unregulated and only occasional festivals (such as the Great White North Dragon Boat Challenge and the Summer Sensation Dragon Boat Race) are held there. The Argonaut Rowing Club (ARC) facility is located at the western end of the new watercourse. Its docks are located within the area of the new watercourse. Its members train there and the club holds its courses largely within the same area. Other users such as the Ontario Place Marina, the Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club and the Boulevard Club travel through the area to gain access out to the lake through openings in the breakwall. Local Dragon Boat clubs train throughout this stretch of flat water including occasional use of the area where the new watercourse is being built. Any closure of the new watercourse for special events will impact these users and the Argonaut Rowing Club, whose access to their docks may be restricted in particular. Most of the current flat water users would prefer the watercourse to be used primarily as an expanded training facility and event venue for the sports activities that they currently participate in at this location.

Advisory Committee:

In order to solicit their input and advice, Parks, Forestry and Recreation invited various stakeholders to a meeting on July 14, 2005 to propose the establishment of a Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee (WBWAC). The purpose of the Committee would be to provide advice to the Division regarding a permit process for use of the watercourse following the Club Crew World Championship and to help solve any issues or disagreements arising from scheduling. The intention is to ensure that stakeholder interests are equally represented and considered in the decision making process.

The WBWAC will be an advisory committee. Final decisions related to permitting of the Western Beaches Watercourse will rest with the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division. However, every effort will be made to address issues that are raised by the Committee, to minimize and mitigate any adverse impacts that could result from any special events that are approved or to deny permits if necessary.

As with all Special Events that are arranged by Parks, Forestry and Recreation for its parks and facilities, permit fees for any special events would be negotiated to recover all costs associated with the staging of the event, including administrative costs.

The mandate of the WBWAC will be:

- to provide expert advice on operating the Watercourse;
- to promote and communicate awareness and understanding of the Watercourse;
- to review and provide advice on all applications for use of the Watercourse including events and programs;
- to assist in the development of sponsorship and fundraising initiatives related to expanding the Western Beaches Watercourse; and
- to participate in community consultations regarding long-range planning and strategies for use of the Watercourse.

At the meeting on July 14, 2005, the West End Beaches Stakeholders Association (WEBSA) proposed that the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee (WBWAC) be created as a

Sub-Committee of their organization. Current membership of WEBSA is limited to three organizations - Argonaut Rowing Club (ARC), Boulevard Club (BC), and the Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club (TSCC). An invitation has been extended to the Toronto Chinese Business Association (TCBA) who operates the Toronto International Dragon-boat Race Festival (TIDRF) to join.

WEBSA was originally established to provide stakeholder input into the planning of the new Watercourse. Its objective is to work with the responsible government agencies and non-governmental organizations to advocate for the needs of the daily users of the western beaches, to address issues such as on-water traffic patterns and safety and to assist in reversing the deterioration of the breakwall and beaches. To date, WEBSA has held five monthly meetings, has scheduled joint boat operator licensing courses, has addressed a number of safety and traffic pattern issues, has developed a draft set of Objects for incorporation, has announced itself to the Council of Commodores and has begun a Water-Use Study with the assistance of consultants provided by the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC).

WEBSA, in consultation with the City of Toronto, will be a suitable forum to resolve issues and disputes related to the regular daily use of the Western Beaches Watercourse and other flat-water areas behind the existing Western Beaches breakwall. Since WEBSA represents most of the major daily users of the watercourse and other “flat water” areas behind the existing breakwall, their leadership on the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee will be integral to its success. The City of Toronto supports their recommendation that the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee be formed as a sub-committee to the West End Beaches Stakeholders Association, providing that WBWAC membership will include all WEBSA members and will be open to all stakeholders with an interest in special events that may be permitted on the watercourse, irrespective of whether these other stakeholders are invited to join or become members of WEBSA.

The WBWAC will report directly to the City of Toronto, through the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division. Membership should include local councillors, residents and businesses; Economic Development, Culture and Tourism’s Tourism Unit; Exhibition Place and Ontario Place; and governing bodies of rowing, canoeing, dragon boating and other water sport and event organizations and clubs as appropriate. The proposed membership of the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee (WBWAC) is outlined in the attached Terms of Reference (Attachment 1).

Opportunities to extend the course to its full 1,000 metre length:

The alignment of the breakwall for the new watercourse has been designed so that it can feasibly be extended to its full 1,000 metre length (1,150 metre including a 150 metre start/finish) should funds be made available to construct it. Without administration, design fees or contingency, the cost to construct a 500 metre extension in 2005 dollars would be approximately \$28,500.00 per metre, and \$32,900.00 per metre if administration and design costs are included. For a future fund raising effort, a target of approximately \$20,000,000.00 would be appropriate.

The impetus for the construction of the new Western Beaches Watercourse was the selection of the City of Toronto as the host of the International Dragon Boat Federation Club Crew World Championships in August 2006, subject to a suitable venue at the Western Beaches being

constructed to host the competition. Public funding (Federal \$15,000,000.00, Provincial \$4,000,000.00 and City \$4,000,000.00) was provided towards the \$23,000,000.00 construction cost.

As noted above, the Argonaut Rowing Club has advised Rowing Canada that they have an interest in hosting the 2010 World Rowing Masters Regatta (WRMR). Other orders of government and corporate sponsors could be approached to fund an extension to the new watercourse if Toronto is selected as the Canadian entry for the bid to host this international championship.

Future operating cost implications of the Western Beaches Watercourse:

At this time, the future operating cost implications to the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division are expected to be minimal and restricted to additional administrative costs associated with permitting of the facility; and for staff time to attend meetings with the proposed Advisory Sub – Committee, to estimate costs associated with any permitted events and to negotiate permit fees. All event organizers would be required to pay permit fees to recover all associated costs.

Conclusions:

The Western Beaches Watercourse will provide the City with a “flat water” facility for dragon boat racing, rowing and paddling that will meet the standards required for the IDBF Club Crew World Championship in August 2006. The facility will not meet the standards for most international rowing or canoeing competitions. It will cost approximately twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000.00) to extend the course to the length required for International Dragon Boating World Championships and some major rowing competitions. The 2010 World Rowing Masters Regatta (WRMR) could be the catalyst for the extension to the 1,150 metre length (an additional 650m). Federal, Provincial and City funding would be needed to finance the extension.

Although the Watercourse will technically be able to accommodate wakeboarding competitions such as Wakestock, no interest has been expressed by the event organizers in staging their event anywhere else, than on Toronto Island. It cannot be guaranteed that the organizers would choose Toronto as the venue for future events if the Western Beaches Watercourse was the only location offered to them.

The entire flat water area behind the existing breakwall extends from Ontario Place to the Humber River and is used daily by rowers, dragon boaters and sailors. Major events on the new Western Beaches Watercourse will impact on these users and other stakeholders in the vicinity. Consultation with these stakeholders will be facilitated through a Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee (WBWAC) and all efforts will be taken to minimize and mitigate any adverse impacts. The WBWAC will be a sub-Committee of the West End Beaches Stakeholders Association (WEBSA) which, in consultation with the City, will provide a forum to resolve issues and disputes related to the regular daily use of the Western Beaches Watercourse and other flat-water areas behind the existing Western Beaches breakwall.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Attachment 2: Dragon Boat Racing; Rowing and Canoeing Standards

Attachment 1: Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Background

The Western Beaches Watercourse will be owned and operated by the City of Toronto, through the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division. Toronto Water will maintain the breakwall located in the Watercourse. The Toronto Port Authority has jurisdiction under the Navigational Waters Act to regulate and provide permits for “on water” activities. The West End Beaches Stakeholders Association (WEBSA) has been established to promote and protect the West End Beaches area in Toronto for multiple water sports and recreational use.

Purpose

To be an advisory body to the City of Toronto, through Parks, Forestry and Recreation, on issues related to the operations of the Western Beaches Watercourse.

The Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee (WBWAC) will follow the principles of Parks, Forestry and Recreation’s standard “Terms of Reference for Community Advisory Councils” and model after “Option 1 – Community Input”.

Final decisions related to permitting of the Western Beaches Watercourse will rest with the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division. However, every effort will be made to address issues that are raised by the Committee, to minimize and mitigate any adverse impacts that could result from any special events that are approved or to deny permits if necessary.

Mandate

- To provide expert advice on operating the Watercourse;
- To promote and communicate awareness and understanding of the Watercourse;
- To review and provide advice on all applications for use of the Watercourse including events and programs;
- To assist in the development of sponsorship and fundraising initiatives related to expanding the Western Beaches Watercourse; and
- To participate in community consultations regarding long-range planning and strategies for use of the Watercourse.

Membership

The Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee should include the following stakeholders. Other stakeholders and organizations will be added as required:

- City of Toronto Council – Local Area Councillors;
- Argonaut Rowing Club
- Boulevard Club
- Canoe Ontario
- Dragon Boat Canada

- Exhibition Place
- Grenadier Group (Sunnyside leaseholders)
- Ontario Place
- Ontario Sailing Association
- Palais Royale leaseholders
- Row Ontario
- Royal Canadian Legion – Branch 344
- Toronto International Dragon Boat Race Festival
- Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club
- Toronto Port Authority
- Toronto Sculling Club
- Economic Development, Culture and Tourism’s Tourism Unit; and
- staff representatives from Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Event Support Team

Terms of Appointment and Process

- The BWAC will be a Sub-Committee of WEBSA. BWAC membership will include all WEBSA members and will be open to all stakeholders listed in the "Membership" section. The BWAC will report directly to the City of Toronto, through the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division.
- On behalf of WEBSA, the City of Toronto’s Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division will invite all stakeholders groups indicated in “Membership” to join the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee by appointing a representative prior to the first meeting.
- The chair of WEBSA will chair the initial meeting of the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee.
- Once the Advisory Committee is in place, the Committee will elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and have the ability to recruit and appoint new members as needed.
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation shall be ex-officio members of the Committee.

Reporting

- Minutes of the WEBSA and BWAC meetings will be made available to members of the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee.
- Appropriate reports concerning the Western Beaches Watercourse will be prepared by Parks, Forestry and Recreation for the Economic Development and Parks Committee.
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation will regularly consult with the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee and, if possible, seek their advice prior to submitting reports dealing with the operations of the Watercourse to Committee and Council. Concerns raised by the Advisory Committee will be noted in Committee and Council reports.

Administration

- Meeting quorum is 60% of current membership and includes both citizen members and elected officials.
- The Advisory Committee will meet a minimum of 3 times per year, and can hold additional meetings if needed, at the call of the Chair, in consultation with Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

Staff Support

- The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division will provide primary administrative support for the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee.

Principles for Operation of the Watercourse

Parks, Forestry and Recreation will receive all requests through an application process for events and use of the watercourse and after consultation with the Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee and the Toronto Port Authority, approve and issue permits.

Applications must be received by December 31 for the following year. Applications received after the deadline will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

All requests will be reviewed, assessed and considered in accordance with the following principles:

- Disruption the event will cause to the neighbouring community and to the primary users of the flat-water areas behind the watercourse breakwall and existing breakwalls to its east and west, including access of clubs to docks and water for normal activities; and proposed actions to be taken by event organizers to minimize or compensate for these disruptions
- Use of motorized watercraft, including number of watercrafts, speed and size; and potential impacts
- Economic and tourism benefits to the City
- Safety plan and Insurance
- Duration of the event
- Availability and capacity of the watercourse
- Non-availability of suitable alternative venues
- Annual activities already planned
- History of the event and event organizers
- Land based activities in Marilyn Bell Park and surrounding venues
- Environmental and transportation impacts

Attachment 2: Dragon Boat Racing; Rowing and Canoeing Standards

Extracts from the Dragon Boat Course Feasibility Study – Final Report – September 2004

Table 3.1
Dragon Boat Watercourse Requirements

Course Level	Length	Lanes & Width	Total Width	Depth	Wave & Currents
World Championship	1000 m plus 150 m at finish for minimum of 1150 m	15 m travel lane + (6 racing lanes x 15 m or max 9 lanes x 10 m) + 15 m travel lane	120 m including 2 travel lanes	3.0 m if uniform depth, otherwise 3.5 m minimum	"Water as flat and as still as can be obtained" (IDBF rules)
Club Crew World Championships	500 m ¹ plus 150 m at finish for minimum of 650 m	15 m travel lane + 4 racing lanes x 15 m ¹) + 15 m travel lane	90 m including 2 travel lanes	3.0 m if uniform depth, otherwise 3.5 m minimum	"Water as flat and as still as can be obtained" (IDBF rules)
Corcom WC	500 m			3.0 m if uniform depth, otherwise 3.5 m minimum	
International (non championship)	500 m	3 racing lanes x 9 m width			

Table 3.3
Rowing Watercourse Requirements

Course Level	Length	Lanes & Width	Total Width	Depth	Waves & Currents
FISA Championship Rowing Regatta	2000 m plus 150 m at finish for min 2150 m	27 m travel lane + (8 racing lanes x 13.5) + 27 m travel lane	162 m including 2 travel lanes	3.5 m	No stream; not influenced by waves; banks designed for wave absorption
International Regatta Course	2000 m plus 150 m at finish for min 2150 m	13.5 m travel lane + (8 racing lanes x 13.5) + 13.5 m travel lane	135 m including 2 travel lanes	3.5 m	No stream; not influenced by waves; banks designed for wave absorption
Masters	1000 m plus 150 m at finish for min 1150 m	13.5 m travel lane + (8 racing lanes x 13.5) + 13.5 m travel lane	135 m including 2 travel lanes	3.5 m	No stream; not influenced by waves; banks designed for wave absorption

Table 3.4
Canoeing Watercourse Requirements

Course Level	Length	Lanes & Width	Total Width	Depth
World Championships seniors	Races up to 1000 m should be straight and in one direction, 1000 m+ turning points are permitted.	9 x 9m	The course at the start shall permit a clear width of at least 5 m for each boat	At least 2 m for the entire course
World Championships Juniors	Races up to 1000 m should be straight and in one direction, 1000 m+ turning points are permitted.	9 x 9m	The course at the start shall permit a clear width of at least 5 m for each boat	At least 2 m for the entire course
Olympic Games	Races up to 1000 m should be straight and in one direction, 1000 m+ turning points are permitted.	9 x 9m	The course at the start shall permit a clear width of at least 5 m for each boat	At least 2 m for the entire course