

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

May 25, 2006

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

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

Subject: Development of a formal Trailhead to the Lower Don River Parklands –
Authority to enter into an Easement Agreement – 11 Redway Road
Ward 29 - Toronto-Danforth

Purpose:

To obtain authority to enter into an easement agreement with Loblaws Properties Limited for the purposes of developing a formal trailhead to the Lower Don River Parklands.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

It is estimated that completion of the project will cost approximately \$25,000.00. Loblaws Properties Limited has committed \$12,500.00 towards the project. The remainder has been budgeted for in Capital Account “CPR124-36-01 City Wide Environmental Initiatives - FY2006” for Don Valley Trail Management and Forest Restoration.

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

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) authority be granted to enter into an easement agreement with Loblaws Properties Limited for the purposes of developing a formal trailhead to the Lower Don River Parklands; and
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The Lower Don River Parklands feature an extensive natural surface trail system that is very popular among hikers, dog walkers, trail runners and cyclists. The most common access to these trails is the Loblaws Millwood Market at 11 Redway Road. This access is most common as there is parking, washrooms and shopping available. In addition, there are five trail systems accessible from this location, and this site is a common resting stop for trail users continuing on the trail. Trail users park in a separate Loblaws parking lot, which is minimally used by store staff.

The current access to the trails is through a hole in a chain-link fence that identifies the property line. Access through this fence poses safety concerns and impacts the natural environment surrounding the area. Staff from the City of Toronto, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Hydro One and Enbridge performing technical services in the forest also access the site at this point.

The nearby parkland is owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and managed by the City of Toronto.

Comments:

There is no appropriate location on parkland for development of a trailhead area. Loblaws Properties Limited has granted permission to develop a formal trailhead area, including an interpretive sign, seating and garbage receptacles, to be placed on the Loblaws 'Millwood Market' property. Trail users will be encouraged to access local parkland through this trailhead. Interpretive signage will describe the significance of the woodland area surrounding the trails, descriptions of plant and wildlife species commonly found in the area, and information regarding Carolinian Forests. There will be a trail information kiosk containing information about the trail system, rules of the trail, and hazards/trail condition notification. The ground will be re-graded to reduce erosion, and an attractive cedar fence will replace the chain link fence along the length of the trail head.

The City of Toronto will assume responsibility for maintaining the trailhead features. The surrounding natural area is currently managed by Parks, Forestry and Recreation, with specific emphasis on trail management by the Natural Environment and Community Programs group.

Loblaws Properties Limited is supportive of this project and has agreed to allow a public easement and to provide \$12,500.00 toward the project.

Conclusions:

An easement agreement is required with Loblaws Properties Limited to legitimize the trailhead to the Lower Don River Parklands. In order to proceed with this easement agreement, City Council's authorization is required. Once the easement agreement is in place, it will be possible to develop the trailhead to provide interpretive signage, cedar fences and stone seating to improve the entrance to the adjacent natural parkland. There is no appropriate location on City

of Toronto property for a trailhead. The support and contribution from Loblaws Properties Limited to this project enables provision of a safe, educational and attractive access for park users.

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