

Parks and Environment Committee

Meeting No.	4	Contact	Rosalind Dyers, Committee Administrator
Meeting Date	Tuesday, May 8, 2007	Phone	416-392-8018
Start Time	9:30 AM	E-mail	pec@toronto.ca
Location	Committee Room 1, City Hall		

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PE4.1	DEFERRED		Transactional	Ward: All
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Parks Renaissance Strategy - Progress Report (Presentation)

City Council Decision

City Council on May 23, 24 and 25, 2007, deferred consideration of this Item to its special meeting on June 11, 2007.

(April 20, 2007) report from General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

Committee Recommendations

The Parks and Environment Committee recommends that:

1. Council endorse, in principle, the preliminary list of the following eight action areas, and perspectives which were not included in the previous Parks Renaissance Strategy report, where future investments and activities should be concentrated in order to create a 'Parks Renaissance':
 - a. Improving the Overall Quality of Parks and Trails:

Expedite the construction of bike trails through the parks system and report back on the establishment of a standard for park bike trails in the City;

Create a "City waterfront park" linkage for the City through art and design;
 - b. Natural Areas: Education and Stewardship at the Forefront;
 - c. City-Wide Parks: Management Plans to Maintain a Diversity of Experiences:

Identify and recommend strategies for the growth of Arts and Culture taking

place in our public parks with special consideration to the promotion of Arts and Culture through co-ordination and collaboration with community partners such as the Arts Council;

d. Local Parks: Create Hubs of Neighbourhood Activity:

Explore with School Boards development and use of sports fields;

e. Trails: Build a Significant Trail System:

Establish the Don Green Way as a significant waterfront natural linkage from the Lake to the mouth of the Don River;

f. Engage People: Better Communication and Involvement:

Identify the role of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation web page and other internet related marketing opportunities as well as identify the opportunities for collaboration with Tourism Toronto on the promotion of Destination Parks;

g. Financing the Renaissance: Increased Funding and Partnership Opportunities; and

h. Integrating Toronto's Climate Change Operational:

Identify the role of Parks, Forestry and Recreation in meeting the City's Tree Canopy goals including enhancement of current tree planting policies and practices;

Stimulation and support for local food production and consumption initiatives such as community gardens and farmer's markets;

Highlighting opportunities for renewable energy demonstration projects;

Meeting the City's solid waste reduction goals; and

2. the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation:

a. as part of the community consultation process, hold information meetings in specific wards to gain the perspective of park users' preferences; and

b. report to the Parks and Environment Committee on the Parks Renaissance Strategy, in time for the 2008 budget considerations, and include in the report strategies for engaging marginalized and low-income communities in advisory roles in parks management.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from the adoption of this report.

Summary

The Parks Renaissance Strategy (PRS) is being undertaken by the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division in order to realize the goals set out in Our Common Grounds, the Division's strategic plan for revitalization of its parks, trails, urban forest and recreation facilities. The PRS will be an action-oriented and creative strategy that sets the stage for a multi-year re-investment program in Toronto's parks and trails.

Work to date has focused on background research, an extensive consultation program and the development of a first draft Strategy. A preliminary list of recommended action areas where future investments and activities should be concentrated in order to create a 'Parks Renaissance' has been identified at this time:

1. Improving the Overall Quality of Parks and Trails;
2. Natural Areas: Education and Stewardship at the Forefront;
3. City-Wide Parks: Management Plans to Maintain a Diversity of Experiences;
4. Local Parks: Create Hubs of Neighbourhood Activity;
5. Trails: Build a Significant Trail System;
6. Engage People: Better Communication and Involvement; and
7. Financing the Renaissance: Increased Funding and Partnership Opportunities.

Next steps in the development of the Parks Renaissance Strategy include delivery of the final draft by the consultant (May 2007), review and consultation with internal stakeholders (Spring 2007), presentation to the public (early Fall 2007) and a report to the Parks and Environment Committee and Council (Fall 2007).

Background Information

Attachment: Report dated April 20, 2007

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-3367.pdf>

Attachment: Report dated April 18, 2006

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-3368.pdf>

Speakers

Anne Marra, Director, Parks Development and Infrastructure Management, Gary Short, Manager, Park Planning and Development and Alex Shevchuk, Project Manager, Parks Renaissance Strategy, and Pino Di Mascio, MCIP, RPP, Partner, Urban Strategies, gave a presentation on the Parks Renaissance Strategy

Franz Hartmann, Executive Director, Toronto Environmental Alliance

Jutta Mason, CELOS

Decision Advice and Other Information

The Parks and Environment Committee:

Parks and Environment Committee Report - Meeting No. 4
Considered by City Council on May 23, 24 and 25, 2007

1. recommended that the Executive Committee deem the Sports Framework Strategy to be in the mandate of the Parks and Environment Committee and the Community Development and Recreation Committee;
2. upon the adoption of Recommendation 1. by the Executive Committee, will request the Chairs of the Parks and Environment Committee and the Community Development and Recreation Committee to call a joint meeting to consider the matter of the Sports Framework Strategy;
3. deferred the following motion proposed by Councillor Walker for consideration by the Parks and Environment Committee when it considers the Parks Acquisition Policy:

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

1. the allocated funding for the Parks Department (including Forestry) in the City of Toronto since 1998, in terms of City Council approved Capital and Operating budgets, such report to identify funding allocations per capita, by ward and by service district;
2. the collected Parks Levies and/or cash-in-lieu donations received by the City of Toronto since 1998 from approved developments in the City, and such report to provide a ward by ward accounting of this funding, identifying the source of the levy, amount of levy, when it was received by the City, on what project(s) the levy was allocated, if it was spent in part or whole, and if any surplus is left from any specific levy; and
3. the feasibility of implementing an “Adopt-A-Park” program in Toronto, particularly in Ward 22, and that such program is to formalize an arrangement with volunteer residents who assume responsibility for non-intensive maintenance and seasonal plantings for a specific park, parkette, or green space.”

Submitted Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Councillor Paula Fletcher, Chair, Parks and Environment Committee