

Feasibility of using City-wide Parks Improvement Fund towards Neshama Playground Project in Oriole Park

Date:	October 27, 2008
To:	City Council
From:	Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 22 – St. Paul’s
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the feasibility of the 1.25% devoted to City-wide Parks Improvement reserve fund being directed to the Neshama Playground pilot project.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the receipt of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

Toronto East York Community Council at its meeting of Tuesday, October 7, 2008 recommended that: “In addition to the additional 5% Parks Levy devoted to improvements in the vicinity of the development being spent on the Neshama Playground for disabled children pilot project, City Council directs the 1.25% of the base Parks Levy devoted to Local Parks Improvements to the Parks pilot project, Neshama Playground.” (Item TE19.14, #6)

Toronto East York Community Council further requested that the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation report directly to City Council on the feasibility of 1.25% devoted to City-wide Parks Improvement be directed to the Parks pilot project, Neshama Playground.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/te/decisions/2008-10-07-te19-dd.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Cash-In-Lieu Policy

The current City policy for Cash-in-Lieu for Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) purposes was established by City Council at its meeting held July 27, 28, 29 & 30, 1999. The adopted policy directed that funds acquired for cash-in-lieu of land dedication as part of the development process be allocated as follows:

50% for **acquisition** of land for parks and recreation purposes:

1. Within this amount, half of these funds (25% of the total) be retained to acquire land for park or open space purposes in the local district where the funds were generated and deficiencies have been identified; and
2. The remaining half (25% of the total) be allocated on a City-wide basis to purchase land for park or open space purposes in other areas of the City where deficiencies have been identified.

50% for the **development** of parks and recreation facilities:

1. Of this amount, half of these funds (25% of the total) be retained for the development and upgrading of parks and recreation facilities in the local district where the funds were generated where deficiencies have been identified; and
2. The remaining half of this amount (25% of the total) be allocated for the development and upgrading of parks and recreation facilities on a City-wide basis, in areas where deficiencies have been identified.

Neshama Park Playground

Located in Oriole Park, the purpose of this ground-breaking initiative is to design and implement a state-of-the-art accessible playground that creates an enriching experience for all children, regardless of ability or disability. When constructed, the playground will be a unique collection of gardens and play areas creating a 'special children's place'.

Centrally located in the North Toronto community, this initiative is important for all of the residents of Toronto as children with disabilities/special needs are a significant portion of the population that are often excluded from play. This is to be the first fully accessible playground within the City and will attract residents from all over Toronto. Parks, Forestry and Recreation have applied the appropriate funds to this project. The Neshama submission is part of the 2009 PFR capital budget which will be submitted to Council later this year.

COMMENTS

The Neshama Playground pilot project will be a unique universally-accessible amenity within the City of Toronto, and will have district and City-wide significance. As such, it can qualify as a City-wide park improvement and it is feasible to allocate the 1.25% devoted to City-wide Parks Improvement to the Parks pilot project, Neshama Playground.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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