



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Water Connection Funding for the Thackeray Park Cricket Pitch

Date:	January 15, 2010
To:	Executive Committee
From:	Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer Deputy City Manager, Richard Butts
Wards:	Ward 1, Etobicoke North
Reference Number:	P:\2009\Internal Services\Cf\Ec09034cf (AFS #10567)

SUMMARY

This report recommends one-time allocation of \$350,000 from the year-end 2009 Toronto Water Operating budget surplus to cover Toronto Water's cost for the water connection to service the Thackeray Park Cricket Pitch. Existing protocol is that water service connections be installed by the City at the expense of the owner. Thackeray Park cricket pitch will provide numerous social and recreational benefits to the community and at-risk youth groups in the service of two City priority neighbourhoods. The project has gained momentum and community stakeholders have secured additional funding towards the completion of the Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager Richard Butts, recommend that:

1. Council approve a one-time allocation of \$350,000 from the year-end 2009 Toronto Water Operating Budget surplus to fund Toronto Water's cost of the water and sewer service connection to the Thackeray Park cricket grounds.
2. The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the appropriate City Divisions, be directed to report back to Executive Committee on a policy for development-related fee rebates/grants for non-profit organizations.

Financial Impact

Approval of the recommendations contained in this report will require allocation of \$350,000 from the year-end 2009 Toronto Water Operating Budget surplus, to be used to cover Toronto Water's cost for the water connection to service the Thackeray Park Cricket Pitch.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting on August 5 and 6, 2009, referred Motion MM38.19 concerning funding for the water service connection to Thackeray Park to Executive Committee. That motion recommended:

1. City Council approve an allocation of \$350,000 for water and sewer hook-up for Thackeray Park cricket ground.
2. The Thackeray Park water supply and sewer hook up project be added to the appropriate 2009 capital budget program with an offset coming from the Toronto Water & Wastewater Reserve Fund for a net-zero impact on the City's budget.

Executive Committee, at its meeting on September 8, 2009, referred the Motion to Deputy City Manager Richard Butts with a request that he submit a report thereon to the Executive Committee. This decision can be viewed at:
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ex/decisions/2009-09-08-ex34-dd.htm>

Given the policy and financial implications of such a request, this report has been prepared in conjunction with the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer, and the General Manager of Toronto Water.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Thackeray Park is located at the north-east corner of Steeles Avenue West and Kipling Avenue. This under-utilized public space was donated to the City of Toronto by the Toronto Region and Conservation Area to facilitate the construction of a modern cricket ground. The project will ultimately include a regulation cricket field, seating areas, lighting, parking and washroom facilities.

Community stakeholders and city partners believe that the park would be a great location to host the growing sport of cricket. The Greater Toronto Area is home to cricket fans from all over the world, especially the United Kingdom, South Asia and the Caribbean. The cricket ground will also provide a unique recreational opportunity for at-risk youth as well organized cricket teams. The desire to move forward with the \$500,000 Phase 1 cost of this joint project between the City of Toronto and community partners has quickly gained momentum. In July, 2009 the Toronto Police Services Board voted to provide

\$50,000 in recognition of the positive benefits that this cricket field will have on the health of the community and on at-risk youth.

The proposed site requires connection to the City of Toronto's water and wastewater system, at cost estimated by Toronto Water of \$350,000.

COMMENTS

Water Service connections are regulated by the Municipal Code. Chapter 851 - 4 stipulates the rules applying to water service connection including financing and more specifically §851-4C (1) says:

“Upon approval by the General Manager of an application submitted under § 851-4B(1) and compliance with § 851-4D, a water service connection shall be installed by the City, at the expense of the owner, in accordance with the standards and specifications and at rates, fees and charges prescribed by the City from time to time.”

Currently, there is no policy to subsidise or otherwise fund water service connections. City Staff are developing a corporate policy and guideline to be considered when evaluating and acting on requests by individuals or groups for financial assistance towards City development and building-related user fees and charges, including water service connections. The recommended policy will be presented to Executive Committee and Council at a later date.

Since there is neither policy nor authority that would allow Toronto Water to fund private water service connections, no provision has been made in Toronto Water's 2010 Capital Budget to cover the cost of the water connection to Thackeray Park. Furthermore, the Water and Wastewater Capital Reserve Fund has already been matched to capital expenditures when the determination of the 2010 water rate was made.

Thackeray Park is adjacent to two priority neighbourhoods – Jamestown and Jane-Finch, which need substantial infrastructure investment in order to strengthen the community and provide better opportunities for youth living in those at risk neighbourhoods. Given the importance to the community in the area and the momentum built to move forward with the development of a cricket ground in Thackeray Park, together with the efforts of other partners such as Toronto Police, Staff are recommending that Toronto Water's cost of this service connection be funded from 2009 Toronto Water Operating Budget surplus as an one time exception.

Staff will be reporting back to Executive Committee on a policy for development-related fee rebates/grants for non-profit organizations. This policy will specify the eligible City development and building-related user fees and charges, the application and approval process, and the limits on the total amount of grants.

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SIGNATURE

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