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2021 CAPITAL BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Options to Begin Funding the Toronto Ravine Strategy Before 2023

Issue/Background:

- At its meeting on January 22, 2021, Budget Committee requested a briefing note on options to begin funding the Toronto Ravine Strategy before 2023.
- In October 2017, City Council adopted the [Toronto Ravine Strategy](#), and at its meeting on January 29, 2020, adopted the [Ravine Strategy Implementation Report](#) which outlined the key actions and recommendations required to implement the Strategy over the next ten years.
 - The Implementation Report identified how these actions would be undertaken through the existing Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) Operating Budget allocation, as well as the need for new and enhanced investments in both the 10-Year Capital Budget and Plan and the PFR Operating Budget.
- This briefing note provides a summary of the funding committed to the Ravine Strategy in the 2021-2030 Capital Budget and Plan and the 2021 Staff Recommended Operating Budget, an overview of the projects not included in the 10-Year Capital Plan, and opportunities to advance implementation of the Ravine Strategy prior to 2023.

Key Points:

- The 2021-2030 Capital Budget and Plan and the 2021 Staff Recommended Operating Budget reflect PFR's readiness to proceed and capacity to spend.
- The priority for PFR in 2021 is delivery of eight Ravine capital projects at a cost of \$6.2 M funded by the Investing in Canada Infrastructure (ICIP) Program - COVID-19 Resilience stream and continued implementation of Ravine Strategy programs included in the Operating Budget.
- Should additional debt funding for capital projects be made available to support advancing the Ravine Strategy before 2023, the projected budget would be in the order of \$3.0 M phased in over two years (2022-2023) which would advance planning of future work, trail and access improvements, wayfinding, and restoration in the PIAs.
- Should additional Operating Budget funds be made available to support advancing the Ravine Strategy before 2023, programs could advance by one year such that the full \$2.9 M planned increase would be phased in by 2022 rather than 2023. This would require an increase in 2021 of \$0.4 M.

Capital Budget

- The Ravine Strategy Implementation Report (2020) identified a Capital Budget investment need of \$104.9 M in the first ten Priority Investment Areas (PIA).
 - PIAs are areas identified through the Council-approved framework to focus investment over the next ten years, based primarily on high ecological value, existing or planned infrastructure, and anticipated adjacent population growth, amongst other factors.
- The 2021-2030 Staff Recommended Capital Budget and Plan for PFR includes \$0.5 M annually (\$5.0 million in total) over ten years to support implementation of the Ravine Strategy under the *City Wide Environmental Initiatives Program (CWEI)*, which includes funding for a dedicated capital position, Environmentally Significant Area management plans, pre-planning work for future PIA implementation, and support for advancing a Ravine Campaign.
- It also includes \$6.2 M for eight projects with cash flow in 2021, which advance the Ravine Strategy Implementation, funded by the Federal and Provincial contributions through the ICIP COVID-19 Resilience stream.
 - \$1.2 M is related to projects in ravines that are included in the 2021 *Trails and Pathways State of Good Repair (SOGR)* program.
 - \$5.0 M is specific to the implementation of the Ravine Strategy PIAs, leaving a balance of \$99.9 M from the \$104.9 M recommended capital investment that is not funded in the 2021-2030 PFR Capital Budget and Plan.
- The total of \$99.9 M for implementation of PIAs, including \$54.5 M for new amenities (Service Improvement) and \$45.4 M for SOGR rehabilitation of existing amenities, not included in the 10-Year Plan is considered a Capital Needs Constraint.
- In order to advance ravine capital work in the 10-Year Capital Plan, new debt funding or third party funding from other levels of government, partner organizations or fundraising would be required to support the projects and the staffing resources for project delivery.
- As highlighted in the Ravine Strategy Implementation Report, PFR will continue to explore funding opportunities through federal/provincial funding programs and through the identified partnerships with TRCA and Evergreen.
- Should additional debt funding be made available to support advancing the Ravine Strategy before 2023, the projected budget would be in the order of \$3.0 M phased in over two years (2022-2023) which would advance planning of future work, trail and access improvements, wayfinding, and restoration in the PIAs. Specific project allocation would require detailed review in 2021.
 - Growth related funding over the 10-year period is fully allocated to service improvement and growth related projects city-wide that implement the Council approved Facilities Master Plan and Parkland Strategy.
 - Debt funding supports SOGR to address the significant backlog for our existing facilities and parks infrastructure as well as, Service Improvement that will implement the Playground Enhancement Program, IT projects, Accessibility and other special projects.

Consideration of any additional debt funding for PFR would need to be undertaken as part of the City’s overall financial strategy.

Operating Budget

- The Ravine Strategy Implementation Report (2020) identified an increased Operating Budget investment need of \$2.9 M phased in over four years.
- The 2020 Council Approved Operating Budget included \$0.7 M in new funding for litter picking in ravines and \$0.6 M for invasive species management, into the Ravines program with Park People and student internship programs.
- The 2021 Staff Recommended Operating Budget includes \$0.5 M in additional funding for invasive species management and also identifies the remaining planned investment of \$0.6 M in 2022 and \$0.4 M in 2023 to complete the four year phased plan.
- Should additional Operating Budget funds be made available to support advancing the Ravine Strategy before 2023, programs could be advanced by one year such that the full \$2.9 M planned increase would be phased in by 2022 rather than 2023. This would require an increase in 2021 of \$0.4 M.
- Total increased funding of \$1.0 M in 2021, would allow for an increase of \$0.2 M to support the hiring of 4 additional seasonal staff for ravine litter picking and \$0.8 M for invasive species management and expansion of the student internship program. This would expand the ravine litter picking program by approximately 30% and allow for invasive species management of up to an additional 160 hectares.

Ravine Strategy Implementation - Incremental Operating Budget Funding	Budget Year (\$M)				TOTAL
	2020	2021	2022	2023 and ongoing	
Approved 4 Year Plan 2020-2023	1.258	0.539	0.639	0.416	2.852
Advanced Plan 2020-2022	1.258	0.955	0.639		2.852

TRCA Funding Investment

- In addition to funding within the 2021-2030 Capital Budget and Plan and the 2021 Staff Recommended Operating Budget for PFR, the 2021 Budget process also recommends the reallocation of underspent prior year funding transferred to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) in the amount of \$1.6 M to directly advance identified Ravine Strategy implementation priorities for PIAs and the Loop Trail, invasive species management and engagement with Indigenous communities and students in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.

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