

Donations to Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Date:	November 12, 2007
To:	Executive Committee
From:	Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from City Council to accept a number of donations to support the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division's operations and infrastructure. These donations will be used to assist in funding the opening of the City's outdoor artificial ice rinks in early December 2007, make improvements to the playground at the Vine Avenue Parkette and towards park improvements to the gateway to Toronto Island Park (Harbour Square Park).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council accept, with thanks, the donation of \$160,000 from MasterCard Canada Inc. towards the operation of the City's outdoor artificial ice rinks;
2. City Council accept, with thanks, the donation of \$15,000 from General Mills Canada Corporation, for park improvements in Harbour Square Park to be undertaken in the spring of 2008;
3. City Council accept, with thanks, the donation of \$15,000 from Lowe's Canada toward playground improvements in Vine Avenue Parkette that will take place in 2008;
4. the 2007 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Operating Budget be amended reflect the one-time donation of \$160,000 from MasterCard Canada;

5. that the 2007 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Operating Budget be amended to include gross expenditure of \$15,000 for making improvements to the gateway to Toronto Island Park and revenue of \$15,000 from the Clean and Beautiful City initiative;
6. the 2008 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Operating Budget be amended to include gross expenditure of \$28,000 gross to complete the improvements to the gateway to Toronto Island Park and revenue of \$28,000, comprised of deferred revenue of \$15,000 from the 2007 General Mills Canada Corporation donation and \$13,000 from promotional event sponsorships; and
7. the 2008 Operating Budget be amended to include expenditure of \$40,000 to construct playground equipment in Vine Avenue Parkette and revenue of \$40,000 comprised of \$15,000 in deferred revenue from the 2007 donation from Lowe's Canada and \$25,000 from Section 37 funds.

Financial Impact

Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks:

Acceptance of the donation of \$160,000 from MasterCard Canada has no net financial impact on the Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2007 Operating Budget. The incremental operating cost of opening the outdoor artificial ice rinks for the month of December is estimated at \$160,000 and the revenue from the donation will offset these costs.

Gateway to Toronto Island (Harbour Square Park):

The proposed improvements to the park entrance at the eastern portion of Harbour Square Park are for a total of \$43,000 over 2 years. 2007 expenditures will be funded by the \$15,000 donation from the Clean and Beautiful City initiative. 2008 expenditures will be funded by the \$15,000 donation from General Mills Canada Corporation and from the \$13,000 from promotional event sponsorships, deferred from 2007.

The recommendations will impact the 2007 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Operating Budget with the addition of \$15,000 in revenue and \$15,000 in gross expenditure to start improvements to Harbour Square Park. \$28,000 of the revenue will be deferred to 2008 to offset the 2008 gross expenditure of \$28,000 to complete the work on the park improvements. There will be no net financial impact on the 2007 or 2008 Parks, Forestry and Recreation operating budgets.

Vine Avenue Parkette:

The recommendations will have no net impact on the 2007 or 2008 Parks, Forestry and Recreation operating budgets. A donation of \$15,000 will come from Lowe's Canada which cannot be used towards administrative costs and only 10 per cent can be used towards installation or labour charges. \$25,000 in additional funding for this project has been secured through a Section 37 agreement.

Operating costs for day-to-day maintenance and supervision of this facility will be nominal, as the new playground replaces an aging playground. No additional programming costs are anticipated. Any maintenance necessary for the playground would be included in the normal work of parks maintenance crews who routinely service the park and existing playground. Thus, no additional operating budget funding will be required to service this facility.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks:

In April 2007, City Council approved the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division's 2007 Operating Budget. The approved budget includes funding to operate the City's outdoor artificial ice rinks, planned to open in early December 2007.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-6832.pdf>

In July 2007, the City Manager implemented cost containment plans in order to help offset the City's 2007 budget shortfall. Cost containment measures included plans for a delayed opening of the City's outdoor artificial ice rinks in order to achieve \$160,000 in savings.

On Friday, October 5, 2007 the Mayor accepted a donation from MasterCard Canada Inc. in the amount of \$160,000 in order to allow the outdoor artificial ice rinks to open as per their original operating schedule, weather permitting.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks:

Plans were underway to delay the opening of the City's outdoor artificial ice rinks until December 31, 2007 as part of the City's cost containment efforts. Recently however, MasterCard Canada Inc. provided a donation to the City of Toronto of \$160,000 that will allow the outdoor rinks to open earlier in December 2007 as originally planned in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division's Approved 2007 Operating Budget.

Gateway to Toronto Island (Harbour Square Park):

General Mills Canada made the donation as part of its Nature Valley brand "Nature in the City" program. Nature in the City is a national program developed and supported by Nature Valley. Through the program, Nature Valley has partnered with three major Canadian cities – Toronto, Calgary and Montreal - to help beautify a selected urban neighbourhood. The \$15,000 donation from Nature Valley has been matched from the Clean and Beautiful City initiative and will help support the beautification of Toronto Island Ferry Docks park entrance.

Through ongoing promotional activities, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division has secured an additional \$13,000 from third party sponsorships.

The donated funds will be primarily directed towards aesthetic and state-of-good-repair upgrades to the walkways, gardens, signage and park furnishings in the eastern portion of Harbour Square Park. Maintenance costs related to any of the park improvements will be nominal. Thus, no additional Operating Budget funding will be required to service this facility.

Vine Avenue Parkette:

As part of Lowe's Canada's corporate mandate and in celebration of their entrance to Canada, Lowe's Canada has committed a \$15,000 donation to be used towards playground improvements in Vine Avenue Parkette. The funds will be received in 2007 and the work is to be undertaken in the spring of 2008.

Lowe's Canada is currently working with other municipalities where Lowe's Canada stores are located on similar projects.

COMMENTS

Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks:

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division operates outdoor artificial ice rinks across the City of Toronto. The rinks provide a valuable winter recreation opportunity enjoyed by thousands of Torontonians and dozens of groups and organizations that permit the facilities providing additional recreation opportunities to the community. The outdoor rinks are a further vehicle to help the Division's progress on achieving the recommendations set out in its strategic plan, *Our Common Grounds*.

The one-time only donation of \$160,000 will have no impact beyond 2007, and the Division will bring forward a request for funds to operate the City's outdoor artificial ice rinks as part of its 2008 operating budget request. Weather permitting, the donation does, however, allow the City's rinks to open earlier this December and will ensure that this highly valued core service is provided to residents this year.

Gateway to Toronto Island (Harbour Square Park):

The cost of the proposed park improvements will be fully offset by the donation from General Mills, a contribution from the Clean and Beautiful City initiative and additional sponsorship revenue from promotional events that have taken place earlier this year.

Recognizing the need for improving this important gateway to one of the jewels of the City's park system, Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff identified the eastern portion of Harbour Square Park as being in need of major improvements, although no funds were available from the capital budget for such improvements.

This donation provides the City of Toronto with another great opportunity to work with an external organization towards improving the park entrance to the Toronto Island Park.

Vine Avenue Parkette:

Vine Avenue Parkette is located at 200 Vine Avenue near the intersection of Keele and Dundas streets. The proposed site has an existing playground that was built prior to 1995, and its deterioration since that time has had a negative impact on the use of the equipment by the children in the neighbourhood. This playground rejuvenation donation represents a welcome improvement for the park and surrounding neighbourhood.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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