



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Private Donation to Fund an Accessible Water-themed Playground and Sensory Garden at Earl Bales Park

Date:	March 27, 2009
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Ward:	Ward 10 – York Centre
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council to accept a donation of approximately \$1,000,000.00 cash from Ms. Goldie Feldman to facilitate building an accessible water-themed playground and sensory garden in Earl Bales Park. Ms. Feldman has offered this very generous donation in honour of her late parents, Morris and Sarah Feldman, in the hope that it would allow the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division to provide a new play facility for children and adults of all physical and cognitive skill and ability.

The project design would be finalized in cooperation between the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division and the donor. The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division would provide oversight of the project through completion.

Once constructed, the City of Toronto would be responsible for the ongoing operation and maintenance of the facility.

This entire capital project would be fully funded by the donation from Ms. Feldman.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. approval be granted to accept a donation of approximately \$1,000,000.00 from Ms. Goldie Feldman for the purpose of constructing an accessible water-themed playground and sensory garden in Earl Bales Park in 2010;

2. a new accessible water-themed playground and sensory garden project be created in the 2009 and 2010 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Capital Budget with revenues and expenses of approximately \$1,000,000.00 funded from a donation received from Ms. Goldie Feldman and that approval be given to receive the funds into this project;
3. the 2009 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Capital Budget be amended to include \$1,000,000.00 for improvements to Earl Bales Park to be cash flowed \$150,000.00 and \$850,000.00 in 2009 and 2010, respectively; and
4. authority be granted to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate and enter into an Agreement with the donor to accept the donation, and to install a plaque on-site for the life of the water-themed playground and sensory garden in recognition of the donation, all in a form and content satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Implementation Points

The donor, represented by her son, Mr. David Green, local experts on accessibility, community members, the Ward Councillor, and other stakeholders would be consulted to garner input to design considerations for the facility. The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division would be responsible for project management in cooperation with the donor.

The completion of the project would be celebrated with an opening event that would include the unveiling of a commemorative plaque acknowledging the purpose of Ms. Feldman's donation.

A tax receipt would be issued for this charitable donation in accordance with all applicable law and policy.

Financial Impact

There would be a net financial impact that would result from the acceptance of this donation and the construction of this new park amenity. The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division would have to assume annual operating and maintenance costs of approximately \$70,000.00. This funding request will be submitted for consideration as an operating impact of Capital in the FY2010 Operating Budget submission.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2009 and 2010 Operating and Capital Budgets will be amended to reflect the donation from Ms. Feldman. This project will be included in future years' Operating Budget submissions for Parks, Forestry and Recreation as they are presented for consideration.

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

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Presently, the City of Toronto has no sensory garden facility and has a limited number of accessible playgrounds. Earl Bales Park is a regional level park facility and a water play and sensory garden feature at this location would have regional appeal and would attract use by people across the City.

The City of Toronto received written correspondence from Ms. Feldman on March 9th, 2009, expressing interest in providing the City of Toronto with a donation of approximately \$1,000,000.00 in honour of the donor's late parents, Morris and Sarah Feldman. This donation is in support of the City of Toronto's commitment and legislated requirement to providing accessible facilities for people of all abilities. The donation would allow Parks, Forestry and Recreation to build a new accessible water-themed playground and accompanying sensory garden in Earl Bales Park.

Both the water-themed playground and sensory garden would be designed for children and adults of all abilities with special features that enhance the development through play of children living with cognitive and developmental disabilities.

The design of the accessible water-themed playground and sensory garden would involve multiple community stakeholders, including local accessibility professionals, academic experts in developmental and cognitive disabilities, City of Toronto staff, members of the donor's family and the Ward Councillor's office.

It is anticipated that the design process would continue through 2009 and construction would take place early in 2010 in order for the facility to be operational by our target date of July, 2010.

The design and construction of the water-themed playground and sensory garden described above would be fully funded by a donation from Ms. Goldie Feldman and has an approximate value of \$1,000,000.00.

This generous donation would create a welcome new amenity in Earl Bales Park designed for inclusive recreation that enables everyone, from the able-bodied and physically challenged to those with sensory and cognitive impairments, and even seniors to enjoy outdoor recreation.

COMMENTS

The City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division is committed to providing the community with high quality, accessible recreation and leisure opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. The creation of an accessible water-themed playground and sensory garden at Earl Bales Park is a project that is aligned with the Division's strategic plan and would provide increased physical activity opportunities for children, youth and adults with a disability or special need.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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