

## **Parks Plan Consultation Process – Community Partnership Models**

<b>Date:</b>	August 25, 2011
<b>To:</b>	Parks and Environment Committee
<b>From:</b>	General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2011\Cluster A\PFR\PE07-091511-AFS#14345

### **SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to respond to the Parks and Environment Committee's request that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation report back on how Parks, Forestry and Recreation will obtain public input on community board governance models in its upcoming Parks Plan consultation process.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation is currently undertaking research on various community engagement methods including partnerships, sponsorships and governance models, that may be incorporated as part of the Parks Plan development process.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The General Manager of Parks, Forestry & Recreation recommends that:**

1. This report be received for information.

### **Financial Impact**

There will be no additional financial impacts as a result of this report. The minimal cost of the Parks Plan consultation process will be absorbed as part of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation's 2011 Operating Budget.

## DECISION HISTORY

City Council at its meeting of February 22 and 23, 2010 approved the development of a multi-year Parks Plan. The Parks Plan originated from a recommendation in the Division's strategic plan, "Our Common Grounds" to develop a Parks Renaissance Strategy; however, the project scope was expanded to include seven guiding principles: parks and trails as city infrastructure, equitable access for all residents, supporting a diversity of uses, nature in the city, environmental stewardship, place making and community engagement.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getCouncilDecisionDocumentReport&meetingId=3286>

At its meeting of June 12, 13 and 14, 2011, City Council approved the consultation strategy proposed by Parks, Forestry and Recreation for the development of a five year Parks Plan through the adoption of the report "Proposed Public and Stakeholder Consultation Strategy for the Parks Plan"

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getCouncilDecisionDocumentReport&meetingId=4419>

At its special meeting of July 21, 2011, the Parks and Environment Committee, in conducting the Core Service Review, requested that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation report to the September 15, 2011 meeting of the Parks and Environment Committee on how a community board governance model may be included with the Parks Plan consultation process. (PE 6.1 – Core Service Review)

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getDecisionDocumentReport&meetingId=5048>

## COMMENTS

The Parks Plan will guide decision-making in the acquisition, development, management and operation of the system of public parkland in the City of Toronto. Through the development of the Plan, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division will review its current inventory of parkland, current programs and services that occur in public parks, and operational standards and establish future goals and objectives to meet the diverse needs of Toronto residents. The Plan will be guided by seven key principles that were adopted by City Council in 2010:

- 1. Parks and Trails as City Infrastructure** – The system of parks and trails is part of a continuous city-wide green space system that also includes the natural heritage system, publicly accessible open spaces and streetscapes.
- 2. Equitable Access for All Residents** – Parks and trails must be accessible to all residents in all parts of the City and must respond to the needs of a diverse population regardless of age, level of ability, income or cultural background.

3. **Nature in the City** – Natural spaces should be protected, restored and expanded.
4. **Place Making** – Visual appeal and a high standard of quality must be emphasized in the planning, design and ongoing management of public parks.
5. **Supporting a Diversity of Uses** – Parks should be able to handle a variety of uses, appropriate to their location and park type, ranging from active use to passive use, as well as balancing natural areas, tree canopy, community events, urban agriculture and cultural expression.
6. **Community Engagement and Partnerships** – Community involvement, through stewardship and volunteering, should be encouraged to complement existing city resources. Additionally, engaging the community and business partners to complement existing funding should be explored and implemented.
7. **Environmental Goals and Practices** – Environmentally responsible practices and green initiatives should be incorporated into the daily planning, design, operation and maintenance of City parks and trails.

The approved consultation strategy for the Parks Plan follows a similar approach to the Recreation Service Plan consultation strategy held in May and June 2011. The consultations, which will be held in October and November 2011, will seek input from the public and stakeholders in the development of the Park Plan.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff will be developing consultation questions, related to the seven Council approved principles which will guide discussions at the consultation meetings and focus groups. Staff will present various types of community partnership and governance models and will ask participants for their opinion on them.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff is currently conducting research on various community engagement and governance models within the City of Toronto and other jurisdictions. Based on our current research findings, several governance structures have been identified including: Community Advisory Groups, Boards of Management, Community-based Incorporated Non-Profit groups, Conservancies, Trusts and Foundations. Staff has also been directed by City Council to explore the creation of Parks Improvement Areas (PIAs) which would be patterned after Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).

Further research will be conducted on these and other types of community governance models and a summary of these findings will be presented at the public and stakeholder consultation meetings. Recommendations from this research and the Parks Plan consultation process will be included in the final Parks Plan report which will be submitted to the Parks and Environment Committee for consideration in 2012.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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