



Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation – 2014 Funding Request

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January 4, 2014

**RE: Meeting No. 52 (Special) - Budget Committee Meeting –
Wednesday, January 8, 2014 (9:30AM), Committee Room 1, City Hall**

DEPUTATION AND FUNDING REQUEST FOR 2014-2015

BACKGROUNDER – Over Ten Years of Fostering Public-Private Partnerships between the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation & the City of Toronto

To the Members of the Budget Committee,

As the volunteer Chair of the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation (TPTF), I wish to request funding assistance in the *amount of \$125,000* in support of existing City of Toronto parks programming initiatives for the coming 2014-2015 period.

Given the severe damage to the urban tree canopy brought on by the 2013 winter ice storm, our foundation anticipates tremendous interest from community groups across the city, wanting to replant and restore the tree canopy for the 2014-2015 planting season. We have also been extremely successful in working with concerned citizens, community groups, and City of Toronto's urban forestry group in combatting the Gypsy Moth infestations and other urban tree pests destroying our fragile urban forest. This program needs further assistance in leveraging funds to combat these infestations in the coming year.

About the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation

The Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation is a charitable organization that raises funds to support improvements to the City's parks and recreational facilities, and to plant trees across the City. Toronto's tourism reputation as a "City within a Park" is framed by the diverse tree canopy, which covers the landscape of every ward in the City, making our city an even more beautiful place to live. TPTF promotes healthy green spaces and playgrounds to improve the lives of every citizens, by providing us with clean and fresh air, safe spaces for play, sports events, cultural celebrations, and a common place for us all to gather, in one of the most beautifully diverse and developed cities in the world.



Since its establishment in 2002, the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation has done an outstanding job in promoting civic philanthropy, corporate support, and extensive community involvement. We have been a critical catalyst for fundraising and mobilizing millions of dollars in donations to Toronto's parks. In celebration of 10 years of dedicated work in support of Toronto's beloved parks and urban forests, the Foundation is charting an ambitious path with new programs, investments, and service improvements for many parks-related projects across Toronto. With this financial assistance for 2014, we will be able to respond to the City of Toronto's emerging funding needs to leverage private funds for public parks and urban forestry projects.

The historic support from Toronto City Council has allowed TPTF to grow its ability to be an effective fundraising arm for our public parks, open spaces, and natural areas across the City. From 2002-2012, the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation has raised over \$2 million from donations, fundraisers, and grants for the City of Toronto.

The Foundation currently holds about \$370,000 awaiting disbursement to specific Toronto Parks projects. This year alone, some 24 community group projects are being actively supported by the Foundation at no cost to them. Extensive private sector interest in supporting parks based initiatives and tree planting exists, and the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation is uniquely positioned to capitalize on this interest. We intend to become a major contributor to Toronto's Parks and Recreation Facilities, and reforest the city through tree planting programs at no cost to the City.

History of Successful Program Delivery

In 2013, the TPTF has worked with the City to proactively approach priority parks, and arrange to promote and facilitate their private-public donation efforts. Additionally, TPTF has been in a position to provide immediate financial support for the restoration efforts such as Jamie Bell Playground and St. James park restoration. By immediately harnessing our fundraising abilities for City and elected officials' needs, our Foundation as helped to quickly collect, leverage, and distribute funds for these projects, allowing the City to turn tragedies into successful outcomes. The increased profile has seen more parks projects being brought forth by eager community groups wanting to take advantage of TPTF's donation engine.

The result has been a dramatic increase in directed private donations to City of Toronto parks. In 2013 alone, the following are some examples of projects and their fundraising successes:

- **\$60,000-\$100,000 raised:** High Park Zoo
- **\$40,000-\$60,000 raised:** Queensland Park, Fairfield Park, and Douglas B Ford Park
- **\$20,000-\$40,000 raised:** Rotary Peace Park, Rosedale Park Playground, and Forest for the Trees



- **\$10,000-\$20,000 raised:** Riverdale Farm, Gypsy Moth, **and** Jenna K. Morrison Reflexology Footpath in Dufferin Groove Park
- **\$5,000-\$10,000 raised:** Wabash/Sorauren Park and Allan Gardens

Establishing Continued Partnerships for 2014

City support prior to 2012 included both a full-time administrator and a part-time senior manager. The value of these cannot be over-stated, as they never hit the foundation balance sheet in 2013. The 2012 grant from the City has facilitated a transition to self-sufficiency, while still allowing follow-through on administrative support and managerial guidance. The TPTF continues to need such assistance in order to ensure a smooth transition to full self-sufficiency.

Efforts are well underway to replace the City grant for administrative funding, including:

- Pursuit of grants from other organizations (scientific and learning, environmental foundations, provincial and federal government)
- Establishment of a membership program
- Facility management and rental supplements
- Investigation of instituting competitive processing fees to defer bank and e-commerce charges
- Courting of Foundation general sponsors, in addition to sponsors for identified programs

To justify the level of support provided, we believe the City needs to see significant returns – particularly in funding parks improvement projects. In 2013, TPTF has managed an additional \$270,000 in funded park improvements – an immediate return on investment for the City’s transitional grant. In 2014 we project that this will increase by an additional \$300,000 to match our ability to stimulate directed donations.

For 2014, interest grows from communities and business groups across Toronto as well as business groups, and our Foundation allows for 100% of dollars raised go directly to improvements to parks and recreational facilities. The enormous potential of this funding model has been demonstrated in cities across North America, and the City now has the unique opportunity to leverage the work of the Foundation, in order to garner extensive future private sector support for Toronto’s parks system and urban forest.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation, we would like to thank you all of Toronto City Council for their continued support of our community fundraising for park enhancement efforts. The City of Toronto is now poised to further leverage the work of the Foundation, in order to garner further private financial donations in support of Toronto’s parks system, recreational facilities, and urban forests.



We ask that the Budget Committee consider our funding request in the *amount of \$125,000* in support of existing City of Toronto parks programming initiatives for the coming 2014-2015 period.

Sincerely,

Andrew Sorbara, Chair,
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Cc: Gillian Mason, Vice Chair, Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation
Members of Toronto City Council

Budget Committee:
Councillor Frank Di Giorgio (Chair)
Councillor Doug Ford (Vice Chair)
Councillor Michelle Berardinetti
Councillor Gary Crawford
Councillor Ron Moeser
Councillor Frances Nunziata
Councillor James Pasternak