

**Chris Brillinger**  
 Deputy City Manager (Acting)

**Parks, Forestry and Recreation**  
 City Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Tower  
 100 Queen Street West  
 Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2

 Tel: 416-392-8182  
 Fax 416-392-8565  
 jromoff@toronto.ca  
[www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca)

## 2015 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

### Funding for Implementation of the Parks Service Plan in 2015 and 2016

#### Issue:

- At the February 4<sup>th</sup> Budget Committee meeting, the Budget Committee requested that Parks, Forestry & Recreation (PF&R) provide a briefing note on the funds and programs included in 2015 and 2016 for the implementation of the approved Parks Service Plan.

#### Background:

- The Parks Service Plan describes the current state of the City's parks system and provides information that affects park relevant policies, city growth and development, and climate change. It identifies four main areas of priority:
  1. Communicate and connect with users;
  2. Preserve and promote nature;
  3. Maintain quality parks; and
  4. Improve system planning.
- On May 7, 8, 9 and 10, 2013, City Council adopted the Parks Service Plan which will guide the City of Toronto's delivery of parks services over the next five years (2013-2017).

#### Key Points:

#### *Parks Service Plan Operating Funding*

The following initiatives were approved as part of the Parks Service Plan in 2013, but remain unfunded as they were not included in the 2015 Recommended Operating Budget for PF&R.

Operating Funding Request				
Initiatives	Incremental			Total Annual Impact
	2015 Budget (\$ 000's)	2016 Budget (\$ 000's)	2017 Budget (\$ 000's)	
Urban Park Ranger Program	541.5	981.7	-	1,523.2
Horticulture & Urban Agriculture	297.7	313.9	275.3	886.9
Natural Environment Trails	163.5	274.1	131.2	568.8
Enhanced Summer Maintenance & Quality Management	138.9	100.5	298.2	537.6
<b>Gross Expenditures</b>	<b>1,141.6</b>	<b>1,670.2</b>	<b>704.7</b>	<b>3,516.5</b>
<b>Net Expenditures</b>	<b>1,141.6</b>	<b>1,670.2</b>	<b>704.7</b>	<b>3,516.5</b>

These four initiatives support the four priority areas of the Council approved Parks Service Plan:

#### 1) Urban Parks Ranger Program

- The Council approved direction proposed to have Parks Rangers as the point of contact for individuals and groups wanting to engage with the park system, assist with system navigation, connect people to existing opportunities and facilitate community-led initiatives in parks and on trails. Funding required to provide this service is \$0.542 million in 2015 and \$0.982 million in 2016.
- There is currently no staff positions focused on community relations and engagement within the Parks Branch. This program would entail 12 frontline Urban Park Rangers to interface with the public, and two Community Engagement Officers to develop, implement and evaluate community engagement strategies and initiatives from a broader policy and systems planning perspective.

#### 2) Horticulture & Urban Agriculture

- The Council approved direction proposed to expand and enhance urban agriculture and horticultural activities in response to high public demand through creation of new community and allotment garden sites, public education, garden repair and program support. The funding required to provide this service is \$0.887 million over three years which includes proposed hiring of a permanent Community Recreation Programmer, Seasonal Gardener 3's and Youth Leadership Coordinators on a seasonal basis over three years.

#### 3) Natural Environment Trails Strategy

- The Council approved direction recommended improving natural environment trails as sites for recreation, education, active transportation and environmental protection. This recommendation could be implemented through the new PF&R Natural Environment Trail Strategy (NETS). The funding required to achieve this is \$0.164 million in 2015, \$0.274 million in 2016 and \$0.131 million in 2017.
- PF&R currently manages 10 km/year out of 300 km of inventoried natural environment trails. The suggested work program to restore and enhance the additional 290 km of unmanaged natural environment trails would be implemented over the next five years and include increased staffing levels in three program areas: 1) to plan and manage trail infrastructure capital projects; 2) increase maintenance of trails and manage natural area parkland; and 3) promote environmental stewardship and engage communities.

#### 4) Enhanced Summer Maintenance & Quality Management:

- The Council approved direction recommended more consistent achievement of service standards and a positive park experience for users. Evening and weekend park maintenance and monitoring over a 12 week period in summer is proposed to address

higher maintenance requirements in high demand park spaces. The funding required to provide this service is \$0.139 million in 2015, \$0.100 million in 2016 and \$0.298 million in 2017.

- Roving crews would do basic maintenance and monitor parks to identify issues and priorities and report problems. It would also enable corresponding staff and resource allocation to address identified needs.

The total operating funding request to achieve the four main areas of importance in the Parks Service Plan is \$1.142 million in 2015, \$1.670 million in 2016 and \$0.705 million in 2017.

*Parks Service Plan Capital Funding*

- The 2014 Council Approved Capital Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation included \$2 million for increasing and improving park seating as well as replacing park amenities.
- The 2015 Recommended Capital Budget and Plan, subject to Council Approval on March 10-11, 2015 includes additional funding for park seating, park amenity replacement and trails rehabilitation and construction, as outlined below:

Capital Funding Request 2014 - 2018						
Initiatives	2014 Approved budget (\$ 000's)	2015 Recommended budget (\$ 000's)	2016 Recommended budget (\$ 000's)	2017 Recommended budget (\$ 000's)	2018 recommended budget (\$ 000's)	Total
Increase and improve park seating	1,000.0	1,750.0	2,500.0	2,687.5	2,875.0	10,812.5
Park amenity remediation and replacement	1,000.0	1,500.0	2,250.0	2,437.5	2,625.0	9,812.5
Natural environment trails rehabilitation and construction	-	250.0	250.0	250.0	250.0	1,000.0
<b>TOTAL - annual capital request</b>	<b>2,000.0</b>	<b>3,500.0</b>	<b>5,000.0</b>	<b>5,375.0</b>	<b>5,750.0</b>	<b>21,625.0</b>

- The capital funding included in the 2015 and 2016 has three objectives:
  - Increase and improve park seating through a). new social gathering spaces that combine seating with other elements e.g. shade structures, lighting, barbeques, fire pits, drinking water and b). refurbishment of existing benches and picnic tables;
  - Park amenity remediation and replacement e.g. paving, stairways, playground repairs, fencing and gates, lighting and electrical, sports court upgrading, drainage and plumbing repair; and
  - Natural environment trails rehabilitation and construction.

---

**Prepared by:** Ann Ulusoy, Director, PFR, 416-392-8190, [aulusoy@toronto.ca](mailto:aulusoy@toronto.ca),

**Further information:** Richard Ubbens, Director, PFR, 416-392-9711, [rubbens@toronto.ca](mailto:rubbens@toronto.ca)

**Date:** February 11, 2015