



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Change of Proposed Site for The 519 Sport and Recreation Project

<b>Date:</b>	April 8, 2015
<b>To:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>From:</b>	Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Wards:</b>	27, 28
<b>Reference Number:</b>	AFS #21104

#### SUMMARY

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This report provides an update on The 519 Sport and Recreation Project and seeks approval to undertake a due diligence review for a new site located in the Moss Park community, including the site occupied by the John Innes Community Centre. The originally proposed project site at Eastern Avenue and St. Lawrence Street has been determined to be unsuitable for the proposed project.

The 519, with the support of a major private philanthropic donor, is proposing to build the first ever LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgendered, Queer)-focused Sport and Recreation Centre in Toronto. The City of Toronto is currently working with The 519 and the donor to develop a project proposal and parameters for a Development Board that will oversee the planning and execution of the project.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, in consultation with the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, the Moss Park Arena Board and Councillors for Wards 27 and 28, to undertake a due diligence review in partnership with The 519 project team to determine the

viability of redeveloping Moss Park including all current uses of the site and a new 519 Sport and Recreation Centre.

2. City Council direct the Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report to Council in September 2015 with an overall project plan developed in partnership with The 519 project team that includes the proposed structure of a Development Board, community consultation strategy, governance model and funding model for The 519 Sport and Recreation Centre project and the redevelopment of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Facilities..

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There are no financial impacts resulting from the approval of this report. The Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation will report back in September 2015, Budget Committee on a project proposal that will include project funding sources, the capital costs to develop The 519 Sport and Recreation Centre, and redevelop the Community Centre, Arena and park amenities as well as the estimated annual operating and administrative costs for the facility. These impacts will be considered as part of the overall City and Council strategic priorities.

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

## **EQUITY IMPACT**

Issues of homophobia and transphobia in organized sports are well documented. Despite this, there are currently no dedicated sport and recreation spaces for LGBTQ people. The 519 Sport and Recreation Centre will fill this gap by providing needed safe, accessible, dedicated LGBTQ space for sport and recreation. The proposed project will be managed by The 519 which has over 40 years of experience providing community programs and services for vulnerable communities including those experiencing discrimination, homelessness and poverty.

The proximity of the proposed site to the George Street Revitalization will also create opportunities to expand services and programming for vulnerable populations in Moss Park and surrounding communities.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

On December 16, 2013, City Council adopted The 519 Sport and Recreation Project report. This report directed the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and

Administration to work with the private philanthropic donor, The 519, City of Toronto staff and the Ward Councillor to develop an overall project proposal and parameters for an interim Development Board for a LGBTQ-focused Sport and Recreation centre located at Eastern Avenue and St. Lawrence Street.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD25.12>)

On June 10, 2014, City Council adopted a Members Motion by Councillor Pam McConnell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Norman Kelly directing City Council to request that the Government of Canada become a funding partner to help support the capital development of The 519 Sport and Recreation Centre.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.MM52.20>)

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

In December 2013, City of Toronto staff began working with The 519 and a private philanthropic donor ("the project team") to plan The 519 Sport and Recreation Centre ("the project"), the first ever LGBTQ-focused sport and recreation centre in Toronto. The project is a response to a lack of dedicated LGBTQ spaces for sport and recreation in the city, despite growing demand for space from over 40 LGBTQ sports leagues and organizations with over 6,000 members.

The financing model for the project is a combination of private donations and public funds. The private philanthropic donor came forward to contribute one-third of the capital costs for the project and will work with The 519 to raise an additional one-third. The remaining third of funds will be covered through municipal, provincial and federal government investment.

The site originally proposed for the project was the Wheel and Foundry complex located at Eastern Avenue and St. Lawrence Street in the West Don Lands area. Over the past year, the project team has investigated the viability of the original site and has determined that it is not suitable for the project. A new site located in the Moss Park community, including the site of the John Inness Community Centre, has been identified as an alternative location for the project.

## **COMMENTS**

### **The Project**

At a high level, the project team is developing plans for a 150,000 to 200,000 square foot indoor/outdoor multi-use facility. The facility would be built to the highest accessibility and environmental standards, increase passive parkland, and build much needed turf space creating inclusive sport and recreational facilities. The opportunity to redevelop The John Innes Community Centre, Moss Park Arena and Moss Park as part of this

project will allow for the renewal of much needed sport and recreation infrastructure in the community.

### **Unsuitability of the Original Project Site**

The project team has investigated the viability of the originally proposed site at Eastern Avenue and St. Lawrence Street has identified three areas of concern that make the site unsuitable:

- Environmental remediation efforts required for the site resulting in unsuitable timelines for project completion.
- Lack of field space for sports leagues which has been identified as a high priority.
- Location provides fewer opportunities to achieve broader social outcomes

Upon determining the unsuitability of the original site, the project team reviewed its previous site searches that included investigating over 30 sites in close proximity to the Wheel and Foundry location. Of those, a site located in Moss Park was deemed to be the most suitable alternative.

### **Moss Park as a New Preferred Site**

The new preferred site for the project is located in the Moss Park Community, bounded by Sherbourne Street to the east and the Moss Park Armoury to the west, Queen Street to the south and Shuter Street to the north. The site includes a 3.4 hectare public park with a lit ball diamond, soccer field, two tennis courts, a basketball court, a wading pool and a children's playground. On the east side of the park is the Moss Park Arena and the John Innes Community Recreation Centre.

Redevelopment of the Moss Park site will allow for the revitalization of the existing John Innes Community Centre and the Moss Park Arena and will encourage needed local economic and social development in the Moss Park community. The project will support the improvement of community safety outcomes, increase opportunities for economic development, and build a best-in-class competition and recreation hub providing community health and wellness programs. The project team has identified opportunities to establish social enterprises focused on creating employment opportunities in recreation and the hospitality sector through food service, bars, cafés, and restaurants.

In addition to providing dedicated LGBTQ spaces for Sport and Recreation, the project will also enhance services in Moss Park for other vulnerable groups such as newcomers, refugees, and those currently and recently experiencing homelessness. It will also increase opportunity for participation in Parks, Forestry and Recreation programs.

The new location of the site will require the following changes to the project development plan originally specified in the 2013 report to Council:

- Negotiations with Infrastructure Ontario are no longer required.

- Waterfront Toronto involvement is no longer required.
- The project working group will undertake due diligence for the new site, including assessing environmental and urban site conditions.
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation in relation to the John Innes Community Centre and Moss Park amenities and the Moss Park Arena Board in relation to the arena need to be engaged in the development and possibly governance structure of the site.
- The focus of the project will take into consideration the needs of local communities including vulnerable populations such as the homeless and formerly homeless people within the local community.

The financing mechanism for the project will remain largely the same. The project will be managed by a Development Board, consisting of the City of Toronto, The 519 Church Street Community Centre and the philanthropic partner when the overall project plan is approved by Council.

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## SIGNATURE

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