



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Skateboard Strategy

Date:	October 5, 2016
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\CD15-102016-AFS#23508

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for the City of Toronto Skateboard Strategy. The Skateboard Strategy responds to direction by Council during the 2014 and 2015 Capital Budget approval process requesting Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) to work in consultation with the Toronto Skateboarding Committee (TSC) to develop a strategy that incorporates policy, operating and capital plans to support skateboarding in Toronto.

The development of the Skateboard Strategy was informed by an extensive community engagement process which included an online survey, focus groups, pop-up consultations, and on-going engagement with the TSC.

The Skateboard Strategy will serve as a guide to the City of Toronto as it continues to advance its network of skateboard facilities, amenities and programs. It articulates the City's role in supporting and advancing the growth of skateboarding and supports the TSC's work to promote and enhance skateboarding. As a planning framework, the Strategy will help guide decisions for the development of future skatepark facilities to ensure a complete and diverse network. It also identifies opportunities to support community engagement, development, and leadership through skateboarding.

The Skateboard Strategy is closely aligned with and will inform the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (FMP) on the identification of additional skatepark facilities. Recommended actions in the Skateboard Strategy will be incorporated into existing operational work planning, service delivery, budget, and strategic partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council adopt the attached Skateboard Strategy (Appendix A).

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendations included in this report. Adoption of the Skateboard Strategy may however, impact expectations regarding the allocation of resources for the creation and use of skateboard facilities. Although Council requested the inclusion of \$0.500 million in the 2017 Capital Budget for skateboard facilities, future investments in skateparks will be determined through the 20-Year Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, which will impact the allocation of available resources within the 10-year capital plan and operating budget, starting with the 2018 budget cycles.

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

Equity Impact

Parks, Forestry and Recreation values inclusion, respect and diversity and aims to improve the quality of life of all Torontonians through the provision of programs and services that are welcoming and accessible. The development of the Skateboard Strategy is guided by five principles: equitable access, quality, inclusion, capacity building, and sustained engagement. Through the application of these principles, the Skateboard Strategy will help ensure that an equity-based approach is used in planning the skatepark network, and in the provision of future skateboard programs.

DECISION HISTORY

This report and the attached Skateboard Strategy responds to Council direction from 2014 and 2015 capital budget approval, listed below.

At its meetings on January 29, 2014 and March 10, 2015, City Council requested the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Toronto Skateboard Association, to develop policy, operating and capital plans to support program development, state-of-good repair and expansion of skateboard facilities.
2014: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.EX37.1>
2015: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX3.4>

In addition, the following requests were made during the 2016 capital budget process.

At its meeting on February 17, 2016, City Council requested the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to:

- a) undertake the planning and design work for new skateboard facilities in 2016, with costs to be funded from the 2016 Capital Budget for facility planning;
- b) include \$500,000 construction costs for new skateboard facilities in the 2017 capital budget submission, such new locations to be determined by Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff, in consultation with the Toronto Skateboard Committee; and
- c) provide recommendations for an annual capital program for new skateboard facilities in the 2017 – 2026 capital budget to be brought forward at the same time as the Toronto Skateboard Strategy in 2016, in time for the 2017 budget.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX12.2>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 2004, PFR's Recreation Facilities Report (RFR) recommended that the City develop at least four new skateparks (including one City-wide facility) and consider developing smaller skateboard facilities as opportunities arise. The City has exceeded that direction, and currently has 14 outdoor skateparks (12 permanent and 2 seasonal).

To ensure that skateparks provide safe and friendly environments for all users, PFR has developed inspection guidelines and also offers a range of skateboarding programs such as camps, drop-ins, and multi-week instructional courses at various locations across the city. PFR has been working closely with the Toronto Skateboarding Committee (TSC) to promote and enhance skateboarding and to understand how to best support the skateboarding community.

During the 2014 and 2015 Capital Budget approval processes, Council directed PFR to work in consultation with the TSC to develop a strategy that incorporates policy, operating and capital plans to support skateboarding in Toronto.

Over the past year, PFR carried out an extensive community engagement process to inform the development of the Skateboard Strategy and ensure that it reflects the needs of the skateboarding community. The TSC was engaged throughout the process to identify and confirm priorities, issues and opportunities. In fall 2015, PFR conducted an online survey to better understand how the City's skateparks are being used, and received more than 1,800 responses. In summer 2016, PFR facilitated focus groups and pop-up consultations with youth on issues of skatepark planning, design, and programming. The feedback from the consultation process provides the foundation for the Skateboard Strategy directions and recommended actions.

The 20-year Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (FMP) is scheduled for completion in spring 2017 and will guide and prioritize future investment in indoor and

outdoor parks and recreation facilities. The Skateboard Strategy will inform the identification of additional skatepark locations and the planning for facility type, as well as engagement methods to inform design.

COMMENTS

Skateboarding is an established activity that is gaining mainstream popularity, and demand for skateparks and skateboard programming is high. Skateparks provide safe spaces for skateboarders to develop their skills and convene with other members of the skateboarding community. Skateboarding is popular as an unstructured, flexible and adaptable activity with low barriers to participation, and research demonstrates strong links between skateboarding and benefits to personal, community, and economic well-being.

The Skateboard Strategy articulates the City's role in supporting the growth of skateboarding, and supports the Toronto Skateboarding Committee's (TSC) work to promote and enhance skateboarding. It also aligns with other divisional strategies, including the Recreation Service Plan 2013-2017, Youth Recreation Engagement Strategy, and the upcoming 20-year Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (FMP).

The Strategy provides an overview of skateboarding in Toronto, as well as actions to guide PFR in three key areas:

1. Skatepark planning – provides a planning framework to guide decisions in the development of future skateparks, including typologies, gap analysis, and site selection.
2. Engagement through skateboarding – explores the ways in which skateboarding can be used as a tool for community building and engagement.
3. Animation, promotion & marketing – looks at promoting skateboarding in the city and promoting Toronto as a city for skateboarding.

Skatepark Planning

A strong planning and design process can help identify the best use of resources in order to maximize the accessibility of the City's skatepark network. Skateparks developed with a strong community and stakeholder engagement process and appropriate amenities tend to be well-used and are valued assets for a community. The Skateboard Strategy presents a framework to guide the future expansion and enhancement of skatepark facilities and helps achieve PFR's vision of a complete and diverse skatepark network.

A complete skatepark network contains a variety of skateparks that are equitably and geographically distributed throughout the city. The Strategy outlines a classification system to define skateparks by skateboarding style and size.

The Skateboard Strategy presents a methodology for planning the future network of skateparks that includes a city-wide gap analysis and site selection/evaluation. The city-wide gap analysis identifies priority areas for new skatepark infrastructure based on criteria including youth population, need for recreation facilities, areas that lack skateparks, and level of community interest. The site selection criteria will assist in evaluating potential sites within identified gap areas.

Engagement through skateboarding

The Skateboard Strategy identifies methods for ongoing engagement with the skateboarding community and ways to animate communities through programming and events. Skateboarding can also be a tool for youth engagement and leadership development. Finally, there are opportunities to support local skateboarding initiatives and create strategic partnerships to deliver skateboarding events and programs.

Animation, Promotion & Marketing

The Skateboard Strategy outlines the City's role in promoting skateboarding and Toronto as a city for skateboarding. Skateboarding information and opportunities can be communicated to the public through various channels. There is an opportunity to leverage partnerships, sponsorships, and collaborations to raise the profile of skateboarding, provide responsive services to the community, and further enhance the skateboarding experience in Toronto.

Implementation

The Skateboard Strategy will be implemented as follows:

- The Skateboard Strategy will inform the 20-year Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017-2036) on the identification of additional skatepark facilities and associated 10-year capital plans, commencing in 2018.
- Actions relating to programming, engagement, operations, and maintenance will be incorporated into existing operational work planning, service delivery, and budget. Connections will be made to other divisions within the City, as appropriate.
- PFR will leverage strategic partnerships to enhance/increase skateboard programs, hold major events, engage youth, and develop new skateboarding facilities.

CONCLUSION

The Skateboard Strategy will serve as a guide to the City of Toronto as it continues to grow and enhance its network of skateboard facilities, amenities and programs. The directions and recommended actions were developed with significant input from skateboarders and other stakeholders.

The Skateboard Strategy will inform the development of the 20-year Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan that will recommend and guide the creation of new facilities including skateparks. The Skateboard Strategy aligns with other divisional strategies including the Recreation Service Plan 2013-2017 and the Youth Recreation Engagement Strategy.

The implementation of this Skateboard Strategy will support the growth of skateboarding in Toronto by ensuring the development of a complete and diverse network that includes different types of skateparks that are accessible, equitably and geographically distributed. It also identifies opportunities to support community engagement, development, and leadership.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A – Skateboard Strategy