

Encouraging a paddling and fishing friendly City

Date: February 2, 2017

To: Parks and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division

Wards: All Wards

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to the request on how Toronto can become a more "paddle friendly city" and provide information on the location and benefits of waterfront recreational nodes that have been selected by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. the Parks and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of this report.

The installation of five waterfront nodes is funded through the Parks Plan FY2017 sub-project in the Parkland Development project and is included in the 2017 Preliminary Capital Budget and 2018-2026 Recommended Capital Plan. Each node will cost approximately \$75,000-\$100,000 and will be constructed in 2017. There are no additional resources or operating costs required for the waterfront nodes. Any associated maintenance and/or inspection costs can be accommodated within the current 2017 Preliminary Operating Budget.

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

DECISION HISTORY

On July 7, 2015, the Parks and Environment Committee requested that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) provide recommendations on how to make Toronto's waterways more accessible for recreational fishing and boating, specifically creating low water docks for kayaks, canoes and paddleboards to better access the water.

(City Council Decision - PE4.5)

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PE4.5>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

With Toronto's growing population, there are more and more residents wishing to access all that the City's waterfront has to offer. However, this increase is putting greater pressure on the existing access points at the water's edge. The construction of waterfront recreational nodes will help relieve this pressure. A 'node' is a central or connecting point of activity, and as it applies to waterfront recreation, nodes will provide the public with more points of access to the water and opportunities to engage in various recreational water activities such as fishing, kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddle boarding, and other passive enjoyment.

Paddle Friendly City

Parks, Forestry and Recreation was asked to consider how Toronto could become a "paddle-friendly" city and these nodes will support such an initiative. They will incorporate launches appropriate for paddleboats, stand up paddleboards, and other small vessels and allow the public to explore the waterfront. As additional nodes are installed in 2017, they will collectively provide paddle routes for exploring the city from the water.

Fishing

Fishing is becoming more popular along Toronto's waterfront as water quality and habitat improve. Fishing is permitted in City of Toronto parkland except where signs are posted indicating fishing is prohibited. Prohibition of fishing is determined in consultation with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), the TRCA, and other stakeholders; and signs prohibiting fishing are only posted where it has been determined that fishing will have adverse effects on the ecology in that area of the shore. The construction of waterfront nodes will provide anglers with more places to fish and mitigate conflicts between anglers and non-anglers.

Aquatic Habitat

The construction of waterfront nodes will also provide much needed aquatic habitats along the water's edge. This will be accomplished by establishing species-specific structural habitats adjacent to, and off shore from, the waterfront nodes. Such structures could include fish spawning beds, sunken logs, sunken cribs, shoals and rocky reefs. Waterfront nodes provide important focal points for the public and can

reduce shoreline trampling by park users, which allows for significant shoreline regeneration opportunities adjacent to nodes.

COMMENTS

To improve public access to Toronto's waterways, PFR in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) have selected various locations along the City's waterfront to install recreational nodes. The criteria used to select the locations for the nodes are as follows:

- Strong fish habitat and/or strong potential for healthy fish habitat through restoration efforts
- Ability to provide multiple uses, including watercraft launching and fishing
- Proximity to active waterfront
- Good parking access
- Community support

Four recreational nodes were funded through the Parks Plan FY2016 in the 2016 Council-approved PFR Capital Budget. Construction began in the fall of 2016 with two waterfront recreational nodes installed at Toronto Island, one at Outer Harbour, and another currently under construction at Silver Birch. Please see attached photographs "Figure 1" and "Figure 2" of the completed Outer Harbour waterfront recreational node.

Five locations will be constructed in 2017, funded through the Parks Plan FY2017 and subject to City Council approval of the recommended 2017 Capital Budget and 2018-2026 Capital Plan. The five locations are as follows:

1. Bluffers Park (Ward 38)
2. Marie Curtis Park (Ward 6)
3. Prince of Wales Park (Ward 6)
4. Humber Bay Park West (Ward 6)
5. Coronation Park (Ward 20)

TRCA will design and install these nodes. Other potential locations are being identified for future development in the next five years.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Janie Romoff
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Outer Harbour Waterfront Recreational Node - Aerial View

Attachment 2 - Outer Harbour Waterfront Recreational Node - View of Steps

Figure 1 Outer Harbour Waterfront Recreational Node - Aerial View



Figure 2 Outer Harbour Waterfront Recreational Node - showing steps leading to the water for launching non-motorized recreational watercraft such as kayaks, canoes and paddleboards.

