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## 2018 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

### Parks Ambassador Program

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#### Issue/Background:

- At its meeting on October 5, 2017, Parks and Environment Committee requested that the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, report back on the service levels of the Parks Ambassador Program, including budget allocations which would be required in the 2018 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Operating Budget to close any service level gaps or deficits.  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PE22.1>
- The Parks and Environment Committee is expected to receive a staff report titled "Parks Ambassador Service Level" at its meeting on January 18, 2018 from the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreations outlining the required resources as requested.
- This briefing note provides the same information directly to Budget Committee that will be provided to Parks and Environment Committee to ensure the information is available for the 2018 Budget process.
- Parks Ambassadors are a responsive, mobile crew whose day to day work involves ensuring that parks remain welcoming for passive and recreational use and work to resolve conflicts between patrons of the park system.
- Parks Ambassadors also identify issues and opportunities to connect homeless and street involved individuals with programs and services in other City divisions and agencies.
- Currently, Parks Forestry and Recreation (PFR) has one full-time Parks Ambassador and one seasonal position. In addition to their proactive work, these resources are also responsive to demands as they occur. The program has seen a consistent increase in tracked interactions with park patrons over the past several years. This has required that PFR divert resources to address the resident concerns.
- This level of resources in the base budget (1 FTE and 1 seasonal) has historically allowed for a maximum of approximately 10,000 community engagement interaction, 350 referrals to streets to homes and interaction with approximately 120 encampments annually.
- Internal tracking of the program shows an average year over year increase of 37% since 2010 (from 38 in 2010 to 313 in 2017) in encampments, and a 30% year over year increase in referrals to streets to home (from 153 in 2010 to 798 in 2017).
- Further, the geographic distribution of effort is widening, making it difficult for the Parks Ambassadors to maintain historic levels of service in the downtown. Data shows that the

referrals to streets to homes in TEY has decreased from 80% to 73% over total referrals while referrals in all other districts combined have increased from 19% to 26% (all data since 2015). Due to the limited resources, the work has evolved to a complaint driven approach. There is much more work than available resources.

- In 2017, the Parks Ambassadors:
  - Logged over 14,000 work actions: follow-up required after interactions with residents, street involved individuals, internal or external stakeholders ranging from referrals to streets to homes, to answering questions about the program with residents, to safety audits and associated work, to dealing with individuals engaged in illegal activity in parks;
  - Made over 700 referrals to Streets to Homes – note that some individuals may have been referred on more than one occasion;
  - Conducted 16 safety audits in parks – completed through combined Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Metropolitan Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) evaluation – with the community and/or TPS and/or the local Councillor; and
  - Assisted Streets to Homes and/or Parks staff with removal of 313 encampments in parks or ravines.

**Key Points:**

- The current program is supported by one permanent full-time position and one seasonal position with existing base budget funding of \$0.149 million in 2018.
- Due to increasing demand in 2016 and 2017, the program was temporarily increased by two seasonal staff using existing staff and budget resources within PFR. However, due to funding constraints this approach cannot be continued in 2018.
- In order to more adequately meet staffing/effort levels in the downtown area while also addressing the increased volume of work outside the core, PFR proposes that the program has three crews comprised of two full time ambassadors and four seasonal (9 month) ambassadors.
- The three crews, as proposed, would require additional 2018 funding of \$0.350 million which would include one additional permanent full-time Parks Ambassador, three seasonal positions, and an extension of all seasonal positions from six months to nine months, as outlined the table below:

<b>Program Structure</b>	<b>2018 new funding</b>	<b>2019 incremental</b>
One new Permanent, full time Parks Ambassador starting April 1, 2018	\$0.069 million	\$0.027 million
3 seasonal Parks Ambassadors @ 9 months, and extension of existing seasonal position from 6 to 9 months	\$0.242 million	\$0.012 million

Non-salary expenditures, \$6k equipment purchase for 2018 only	\$0.039 million	-\$0.006 million
<b>Total proposed new</b>	<b>\$0.350 million</b>	<b>\$0.033 million</b>
<b>Total cost of proposed program</b> (including existing base budget + new)	<b>\$0.499 million</b>	<b>\$0.538 million</b>

- This increase would result in a total budget for the Parks Ambassadors program totaling \$0.499 million in 2018 with two permanent full-time positions and four seasonal nine-month positions, which represents an increase of \$0.350 million over the current, existing program budget.

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