

## **Development proposed at 8 to 30 Widmer Street: parkland**

**Date:** July 23, 2018

**To:** City Council

**From:** General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and Director, Real Estate Services

**Wards:** 20 - Trinity-Spadina

### **SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to obtain City Council's authority to direct Section 42 cash-in-lieu of parkland funds from the development proposed at 8 to 30 Widmer Street to the South District Reserve Account for the purposes of securing parkland in the King-Spadina neighbourhood.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and Director, Real Estate Services recommend that:

1. City Council direct the full cash-in-lieu payment of parkland dedication collected from the development application at 8 to 30 Widmer Street to the Parkland Acquisition South District Reserve Account (XR2208). The funds will be used to advance the development of a park with a minimum of 500m<sup>2</sup> of unencumbered park space at the City-owned lands located at 105 Spadina Avenue and 363 Adelaide Street West.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

## DECISION HISTORY

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On October 4, 2014, a development application was submitted on the lands municipally known as 30 Widmer Street and 309-315 Adelaide Street West for a 51-storey mixed-use building. On February 19, 2016, a development application was submitted on the abutting lands to the south municipally known as 8-20 Widmer Street for a 56-storey residential building. Both applications were appealed to the former Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) now the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT).

At its meeting on March 9, 2017, City Council adopted a settlement offer on the 30 Widmer and 309-315 Adelaide Street West development application. The hearing with the former OMB was held on March 20, 2017 in which the OMB approved the settlement between the City and developer, with approval of the final form of the site specific zoning by-law and Section 37 Agreement pending the City's review and acceptance. The settlement decision can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CC26.10>

At its meeting on December 5, 2017, City Council adopted a settlement offer on the 8-20 Widmer Street development application. During settlement discussions on this application, the site was sold to the owners of the property to the north, 30 Widmer Street and 309-315 Adelaide Street West, who subsequently submitted a settlement offer combining the two development sites into a single proposal with two tall buildings on a consolidated site. The hearing with the former Ontario Municipal Board was held on January 8, 2018 in which the OMB approved the settlement between the City and the developer for the consolidated properties. The settlement decision can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CC35.7>

In both individual applications, the former OMB approvals recognize that Section 42 parkland dedication requirements will be satisfied through cash-in-lieu payment rather than on site parkland dedications due to the small size of each of the individual sites.

### Background

On May 22, 2018, City Council approved the TOcore Downtown Official Plan Amendment (OPA 406) and the associated Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan (PPR). The OPA and PPR provide a comprehensive and integrated policy framework to shape growth in Toronto's fast-growing Downtown over the next 25 years. They provide the City with a blueprint to align growth management with the provision of infrastructure, sustain liveability, achieve complete communities and ensure there is space for the economy to grow.

Toronto's downtown is growing quickly, placing significant pressure on the existing network of parks and open spaces that serve the needs of residents, workers and visitors. Downtown's population is projected to more than double from approximately 200,000 people in 2011 to a potential population of 475,000 by 2041. The King-Spadina neighbourhood has been one of the highest areas of residential growth in the City over the past 10 years, experiencing a 278% increase in population during that time. The

projected pattern of population growth Downtown indicates a continued concentration of growth in King-Spadina, putting increased pressure on the existing parks within this community. The limited availability of sites in this neighbourhood creates a challenge to expand the King-Spadina park system, therefore, acquisition opportunities available to the City need to be pursued in order to meet future demand. Opportunities to secure parkland to support this growing population have been extremely challenging in this area. Securing and providing new park space for new residents, workers and visitors is imperative if future development is to be accommodated while maintaining liveability.

Downtown is currently the most underserved area of the City from a parkland provision perspective. In 2016, the Downtown parkland provision (residential and employment population) was 1.8 m<sup>2</sup> per person, compared to the city-wide parkland provision of 18 m<sup>2</sup> per person. Taking into account growth projections, in 2032, Downtown residents and employees will have a projected 1.3 m<sup>2</sup> of parkland per person, compared to the city-wide projection of 15 m<sup>2</sup> per person.

The Downtown Parks and PPR identifies "Acquire and Expand" as one of the leading objectives of the Plan. This objective identifies that as the Downtown population continues to grow, creating new parkland and making existing parks bigger, where possible, is required. Acquisitions and expansions will be undertaken to address the notable gaps in the inventory of parks Downtown. In particular, this will include park spaces that are large enough to accommodate a range of programming and functionality and which are critical infrastructure needed to support Downtown's continued growth.

On November 28, 2017, Executive Committee received the Preliminary Report on the City-wide Parkland Strategy. The emerging direction from the Parkland Strategy identifies the high growth areas of the City as being in need of additional parkland and in addition to the Downtown, the particularly high need in the King-Spadina Secondary Plan area.

When the two development proposals were reviewed as separate applications, Parks, Forestry and Recreation requested cash-in-lieu of parkland. For 30 Widmer Street and 309-315 Adelaide Street West, the parkland dedication would have been 119 m<sup>2</sup>, whereas the parkland dedication for 8-20 Widmer Street would have been 188 m<sup>2</sup>. As a combined application, however, the parkland dedication would be 240 m<sup>2</sup>. Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff as well as City Planning staff agree that had the 8 to 30 Widmer Street and 309-315 Adelaide Street West been initially submitted as one development application, the staff recommendation would have been to secure an on-site parkland dedication given the significant deficiency of parkland in this area and the challenge the city has had in securing functional parkland in the King-Spadina area.

## **COMMENTS**

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The City-owned site at 105 Spadina Avenue and 363 Adelaide Street West (the Spadina-Adelaide site) is currently operated by the Toronto Parking Authority (TPA) as a surface commercial parking lot. It provides 35 surface parking spaces and is approximately 1358 m<sup>2</sup> in size. Through the efforts of CreateTO, City and Agency staff

from the Toronto Parking Authority, Parks Forestry and Recreation, City Planning, and Real Estate Services have begun working to identify how the repositioning of this site could advance the Council-approved Downtown Plan and the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan.

The need for new parkland in the King-Spadina precinct is well documented and has become critical. The purpose of this report is to ensure that funds generated from development of land in this neighbourhood will be used to advance the provision of a park in this area. In this case, if the two development applications on Widmer Street had been submitted as one consolidated application, the City would have secured an on-site parkland dedication. To deliver new parkland in proximity of the development, City Planning and Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff are recommending that the S42 requirement of 8 to 30 Widmer Street be used to secure new public parkland as part of the revitalization of the TPA surface parking lot. The Spadina-Adelaide site offers a sizeable piece of land that could transform this area with a signature park sufficient in size at approximately 1,358 m<sup>2</sup> to support a range of programming opportunities. The land owners abutting 105 Spadina Avenue and 363 Adelaide Street West have also indicated an eagerness to work with the City to help achieve these City building goals in conjunction with the development of the adjacent lands.

In addition to being an area of high need for parkland, the Toronto Parking Authority advises that there is demand for commercial parking in the King-Spadina precinct. TPA staff are currently undertaking a review of the proposed parking garage at 8 to 30 Widmer Street to determine if it meets TPA technical and operational requirements. The possible addition of public parking at the Widmer Street property will help to accommodate some of the existing parking demand and support future demand. If satisfactory, the TPA will advance discussions with the 8 to 30 Widmer Street development applicant on the possibility of a TPA facility locating in that development and report on any opportunity through its Board. There is funding in the TPA's Capital Budget to support such a project.

City staff are recommending directing the cash-in-lieu of parkland owing from the development proposal at 8 to 30 Widmer Street to enable the City to secure City-owned lands at the Spadina-Adelaide site for new parkland in an area of high need as well as provide underground parking at the Spadina-Adelaide site and/or through other locations such as 8 to 30 Widmer Street. To make this city building opportunity of delivering new parkland and TPA parking spaces a reality requires various City and TPA approvals. As a first step, this report recommends that the Section 42 parkland requirement from the 8 to 30 Widmer Street development be used to advance the development of a park with a minimum of 500 m<sup>2</sup> of unencumbered park space on the Spadina-Adelaide site. This recommendation represents, in effect, an indirect off-site parkland dedication which satisfies the parkland dedication requirements for the development proposed at 8 to 30 Widmer Street. The staff team will report back as required to advance this initiative.

## CONTACT

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Ann-Marie Nasr, Director, Parks Development & Capital Project

Tel: 416-395-7899

Email: [Ann-Marie.Nasr@toronto.ca](mailto:Ann-Marie.Nasr@toronto.ca)

Lynda Macdonald, Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

Tel: 416-392-0427

Email: [Lynda.Macdonald@toronto.ca](mailto:Lynda.Macdonald@toronto.ca)

David Jollimore, Director, Real Estate Services

Tel: 416-392-8217

Email: [David.Jollimore@toronto.ca](mailto:David.Jollimore@toronto.ca)

## SIGNATURE

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Janie Romoff  
General Manager  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Gregg Lintern, MCIP RPP  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning

David Jollimore  
Director  
Real Estate Services