



Growing the Gardens: Authorization to amend and enter into agreements with Toronto Botanical Garden for Master Plan Implementation

Date: March 26, 2018

To: Parks and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 25 - Don Valley West

SUMMARY

Following a comprehensive master planning and management planning exercise, this report seeks authority from City Council to amend an existing Management Agreement and enter into Fundraising and Construction Agreements with Toronto Botanical Garden, the non-profit organization operating the Toronto Botanical Garden on 1.8 hectares of Edwards Gardens.

The current management agreement between the City and the Toronto Botanical Garden governs the use of the building by Toronto Botanical Garden for its year-round programming as well as the use of lands for the teaching garden. The Toronto Botanical Garden intends to lead a campaign to raise the necessary funds to implement the master plan in collaboration with the City of Toronto, with the goal of expanding the Toronto Botanical Garden programming and interpretation throughout the Edwards Gardens site. The report also seeks Council authority to accept donations raised through the fundraising campaign.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council authorize the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to amend the existing Management Agreement as necessary, and enter into Fundraising and Construction Agreements, with Toronto Botanical Garden in order to implement the draft Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden Master Plan and Management Plan, attached to this report, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
2. City Council authorize the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to accept third-party funds raised through the Toronto Botanical Garden capital fundraising

campaign, as described in the Fundraising Agreement, and to contribute the funds as they become available to Toronto Botanical Garden Budget and Plan for the purpose of capital improvements to the Edwards Gardens - Toronto Botanical Garden site.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Edwards Gardens - Toronto Botanical Garden Master Plan and capital fundraising campaign has a target of \$50 million, to be raised over multiple years and to be led by Toronto Botanical Garden.

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation 10-year Capital Plan includes \$4.856 million for capital projects related to Edwards Gardens, including \$3.750 million for improvements to the park and parking lot, funded from the Parkland Acquisition City Wide Development Reserve Fund; and \$1.106 million for state of good repair rehabilitation work, funded from debt. This work and funding will be incorporated into the initial phasing of the master plan implementation.

This project is expected to meet the City's criteria for a major capital project. Once approved, the project will advance through a "stage gate" capital planning process, providing Council with specific decision points about advancing the project as scope, timelines and costs are clarified. For projects that are partially or fully funded by external partners, budget approval will be conditional on securing the budgeted partnership funding. Until the external funding source is secured, implementation cannot commence.

Any operating impacts for the planned improvements, if required, will be included in future year Operating Budget Submissions.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on October 30, 31 and November 1, 2012, City Council amended its Donations to the City for Community Benefits policy:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.EX23.17>

At its meeting on September 25, 26, 27 and 28, 2006, City Council adopted its Donations to the City for Community Benefits policy.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060925/pof7rpt/cl003.pdf>

COMMENTS

Toronto Botanical Garden is located within Edwards Gardens, a city park at the corner of Lawrence Avenue and Leslie Street in Toronto's North York neighbourhood. Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden share a maintenance strategy for the entire site, of which Edwards Gardens currently comprises approximately 12 hectares, while Toronto Botanical Garden manages approximately 1.8 hectares, including buildings. The site is located on Wilket Creek, a tributary of the Don River West Branch.

Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden

Edwards Gardens is a former estate garden, once owned by Alexander Milne, a Scottish weaver who settled there after the War of 1812. The land and mills were bought by Rupert E. Edwards in 1944 and were sold to the Municipality of Metro Toronto in 1955 to become a public park, becoming Edwards Gardens in 1956. In addition to its horticultural show gardens, Edwards Gardens serves as a gateway to over 380 hectares of ravine parkland south of the site continuing through Wilket Creek Park, Sunnybrook Park, Serena Gundy Park, ET Seton Park, to the south end of the Lower Don Parklands.

Toronto Botanical Garden has a long history with the Edwards Gardens site, originally named the Civic Garden Club of Toronto, and first occupying the 1964 structure of the Civic Garden Centre at 777 Lawrence Avenue. They have occupied the site for 54 years at the current location of Toronto Botanical Garden.

A botanical garden has four basic goals, scientific research, conservation, display and education. With limited space, the Toronto Botanical Garden has not been able to fully engage in scientific research and conservation, implementing the master plan will enable this. The Edwards Gardens site would enable significant opportunities for expansion of Toronto Botanical Garden display gardens and education programming to extend participation beyond the current 5,000 Toronto school children visits and 10,000 adult education program participants.

The ravine lands have no education centre and this strategic location for Toronto Botanical Garden and their excellence with education programming provides an opportunity for aligning with this important mission, to educate on the site and about the ecological value of the parklands within Edwards Gardens and south. The opportunity to integrate environmental restoration and education as part of the master plan implementation is exciting for both Toronto Botanical Garden and the City of Toronto.

Master Plan and Management Plan

The Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden Master Plan and Management Plan ("the Plan"), attached to this report, builds upon a conceptual vision plan entitled Towards a New Garden: Integrated Conceptual Proposals, produced by Toronto Botanical Garden in 2015. The original vision proposed innovative strategies for

expanding and improving the ravine system, parkland, Edwards Gardens and botanical garden complex, but was limited in public consultation and stakeholder input.

The Master Plan and Management Plan provides a holistic long-term plan that is ecologically and fiscally sustainable and elevates the Toronto Botanical Garden to the level of other globally acclaimed botanical gardens. By creating a seamless boundary between Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden, this Master Plan re-imagines the existing gardens as a major cultural attraction with innovative programs activities and events that will attract both Torontonians and tourists.

The Master Plan has eight guiding principles that include improving amenities and operational functionality, celebrating a unique sense of place, improving accessibility and improving facilities to expand programming and enhance visitor experience.

In order to achieve these principles the Plan recommends changes to garden design, site circulation, restoration and parking, as well as new gateways and plazas, pathways and programming spaces. The Plan also recommends relocating the operations yard to maximize the capacity of the site.

Implementation

With the completion of the City of Toronto master plan and management plan, Toronto Botanical Garden is ready to take the next steps by launching a capital fundraising campaign in collaboration with the City of Toronto.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Toronto Botanical Garden will work collaboratively on the first phase of the master plan, once the Toronto Botanical Garden capital fundraising campaign phase one is complete. Toronto Botanical Garden would launch additional implementation phases following the success of phase one of the capital campaign. The City of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority would be stakeholders providing input on requirements for these following phases.

Capital projects will be submitted for consideration in future Parks, Forestry and Recreation Capital Budget Submissions once the required funds have been raised for each phase.

All work will be conducted in accordance with all City by-laws, policies and contractual requirements.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Janie Romoff
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Draft Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden Master Plan and Management Plan