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2020 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Ravine Strategy Implementation

Issue/Background:

- At its January 17, 2020 meeting, Budget Committee requested a briefing note on:
 - a) The feasibility of advancing the proposed Ravine Strategy Implementation service improvements into the 2020 Operating Budget and including in the 2020-2029 capital plan the necessary capital investment requested outlined in the Ravine Strategy Implementation report.
- The Ravine Strategy Implementation Report was considered by Executive Committee on Thursday, January 23, 2020.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX12.1>
- The report recommends new and enhanced operating budget investments of \$2.7 million annually at full implementation, phased in starting in 2021, related to ravine litter collection and invasive species management, including:
 - a) The necessary operating funds to support the creation of a dedicated ravine litter clean-up program, with an estimated annual cost of \$0.657 million, including timelines for phasing in this service level increase.
 - b) Operating funding to support enhanced invasive species management and ecological restoration in ravines, estimated at \$2.050 million annually at full implementation.

Key Points:

1. Ravine litter clean-up program

- The City does not currently have a program for litter picking in its approximately 5,700 hectares of ravine parkland.
- Council requested the development of a dedicated ravine litter clean-up program when the Ravine Strategy report was considered in 2017, and in consultation with Solid Waste Services and Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) is recommending in the Ravine Strategy Implementation report a new service level for litter pickup in the ravine system.
- The ravine litter clean-up program could be advanced at full implementation into the 2020 Operating Budget, due to the seasonal nature of the work.
- The Ravine Strategy Implementation proposes a program that will require \$0.657 million and 6.8 FTE positions, representing three crews with four staff per crew and a foreperson, managed by PFR.

2. Invasive species management

- Currently, PFR undertakes restoration and invasive species management in 400 hectares of ravine parkland per year at a cost of approximately \$2.63 million annually, through dedicated crews of specially-trained staff, contracted services for interventions such as large invasive tree removal, and staff that provide technical and professional support for community and volunteer involvement.
- The Ravine Strategy Implementation report proposes an additional investment of \$2.05 million annually (using 2019 wage rates), phased in over four years, to support restoration and invasive species management in an additional 480 hectares of ravine parkland per year.
- The first phase of funding for this additional invasive species management and restoration funding can be fully advanced into the 2020 Operating Budget as there is flexibility to use a mix of resources in house and contract services while additional permanent staff are hired.
- The phasing would include one additional crew and volunteer management support staff in the first year, then additional planning staff/contractor management staff and a second crew in subsequent years.
- Fully implemented, this will roughly double the amount of invasive species management work done annually.
- It will also allow staff to increase volunteer engagement numbers by 10 to 20 per cent, add an additional one to two Community Stewardship Program sites, assist more *Friends of* groups, and conduct more stewardship events.

3. Operating Funding for Ravine litter clean-up and Invasive species management

- Current proposed phasing of funding from Ravine Strategy Implementation Report, Figure 2. Estimated financial impacts by budget year. Values are \$M.

	2021	2022	2023	2024 and ongoing
Litter collection	0.657	0.657	0.657	0.657
Invasive species management	0.600	1.140	1.770	2.050
Total	1.257	1.797	2.427	2.707

Required phasing for work to start in 2020:

Advancement of the program in 2020	2020	2021	2022	2023 and ongoing
New litter collection	0.657	0.657	0.657	0.657
Additional Invasive species management	0.600	0.600	1.140	2.050
Total	1.257	1.257	1.797	2.707

4. Capital

- The 2020-2029 Staff Recommended Capital Budget and Plan for PFR includes \$0.5 million annually (\$5.0 million total) specifically for implementation of the Ravine Strategy to support capital improvements across the ravine system including ongoing studies; pond and trail improvements; and consultation and design work.
- The Ravine Strategy Implementation Report recommends that staff report back through the 2021 capital budget process with a proposed plan, including funding options, to address the \$104.9 million in needed capital investments for service improvements in the initial ten Priority Investment Areas and any staffing requirements to support the implementation of the Ravine Strategy and any associated operating impacts of capital.
- Given the time lines required for capital project delivery, there is no opportunity to advance this work in 2020.

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