

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM35.7	ACTION			Ward: 9
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Request to Amend the 2021 Parks Forestry and Recreation Capital Budget for a Commemorative Plaque in MacGregor Playground - by Councillor Ana Bailão, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Ana Bailão, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy, recommends that:

1. City Council amend the Council Approved Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2021-2030 Capital Budget and Plan to create a new capital sub-project known as MacGregor Playground Commemorative Plaque in the Park Development project, with project cost and cash flow in 2021 of \$7,500, fully funded by various Section 42 Above 5 percent Cash-in-lieu included in the chart below, for the purpose of a commemorative plaque:

Development Location	Internal Order Account	Amount
138 St. Helen's Avenue	XR2213-4200482	\$4,028.30
311 Brock Avenue	XR2213-4200538	\$183.55
1239 Bloor Street West	XR2213-4200573	\$2,958.52
1340 Bloor Street West	XR2213-4201284	\$329.63
	Total	\$7,500.00

Summary

This Motion requests authority from Council to amend the 2021 Council Approved Capital Budget and 2022-2030 Capital Plan for Parks, Forestry and Recreation to create a new capital sub-project for a commemorative plaque in MacGregor Playground.

The long laneway between Lansdowne Avenue and St. Clarens Avenue, south of Bloor Street West, was associated with the rope-making industry for more than 60 years. This approximately 550-metre linear space was used for decades as a “rope walk” — an outdoor facility for braiding raw textiles into twine, string, and rope.

The St. Clarens rope walk appears on historical maps as early as 1868, running north–south through the village of Brockton. Located west of the old City of Toronto on Dundas Street, Brockton was an independent village until it was annexed by Toronto in 1884.

The Lansdowne–St. Clarens rope walk was operated by the Dominion Steam Rope Factory, a company owned by Archibald MacGregor. Very long lengths of textile (often hemp, manilla, sisal) were laid out along the rope walk and braided together to make various types and sizes of cord used as washing lines, bedcords (ropes tied across a bed frame to support a mattress), or even as part of the rigging of ships on Lake Ontario.

Making rope was dangerous and working conditions were often extremely poor. Hemp is extremely flammable and fires in rope factories were common. Many of the rope makers who staffed the Dominion Steam Rope Factory lived in the surrounding community of Brockton and are recorded in the City directories and local tax assessment records. A second rope walk was located in the village north of Dundas Street West.

Though no photos are known to exist of the Dominion Steam Rope Factory, the rope walk buildings appear on maps of Brockton as late as 1924. Aerial photos taken in the 1940s show the former site of the rope walk developed as housing, however the long laneway and large unbroken stretches of Lansdowne and St. Clarens without a cross-street are clues to the factories' presence in the current day street grid.

MacGregor Playground and park on Lansdowne Avenue — the proposed location of the plaque — is named for Archibald MacGregor, the owner of Dominion Steam Rope Factory.

Authority from Council is required to add a new capital sub-project for the commemorative plaque in MacGregor Playground to the 2021-2030 Council Approved Capital Budget and Plan for Parks, Forestry and Recreation with a project cost and cash flow of \$7,500 in 2021. The commemorative plaque will be fully funded by various Section 42 Above 5 percent Cash-in-lieu generated from developments in proximity to MacGregor Playground. These funds have been received and are eligible for these purposes.

This Motion has been prepared in co-ordination with Heritage Toronto.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM35.7