

## **Park People 2023 National Urban Parks Conference – Host City Partner**

**Date:** January 20, 2023

**To:** Infrastructure and Environment Committee

**From:** General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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Park People, a Toronto-based national registered charity focused on urban parks, would like to collaborate with the City of Toronto as Host City Partner in order to deliver the National Urban Parks Conference in June 2023. This report outlines anticipated host city obligations and seeks authority to work with Park People as Host City Partner.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate and sign on behalf of the City an agreement with Park People, a Toronto-based registered charity, to support the Park People National Urban Parks conference in Toronto in June 2023 as Host City Partner, and through that agreement for the City to provide up to \$25,000 in conference support services, secured through standard City of Toronto purchasing procedures, in return for a Host City Partner benefits package and other benefits, on terms and conditions acceptable to the City Manager and General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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Funding of \$25,000 in conference support services for the City to support the 2023 National Urban Parks Conference as Host City Partner. This is included in the Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation as part of the 2023 Budget process.

Total City funding for conference support services includes in-kind services and support such as logistical support for conference programming, transportation services to tour

sites, bursary programs, study tours and staff resources to support the delivery of the conference in 2023.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been advised of the financial impacts associated with this program to be considered along with other priorities in the 2023 Budget process.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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There is no decision history regarding this request as this is the first time the conference has been held in Toronto.

## **COMMENTS**

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Park People, a national registered charity based in Toronto and focusing on urban parks, has chosen Toronto as the location for its June 2023 in-person National Urban Parks Conference.

Delegates include municipal parks professionals, representatives from parks-focused not-for-profit organizations, and community members, including members of equity-deserving communities. It is the only national urban parks conference of its kind, and has previously been held in Calgary and Montreal. Those cities provided similar levels of support through in-kind services (Calgary) or direct sponsorship fee (Montreal).

At the conference, delegates and experts will discuss and debate the role and benefits of urban parks in contemporary society. In addition to keynote addresses, workshops and presentations, an important part of the conference would include study tours to urban park sites across Toronto. These tours will introduce delegates to innovation in park design, public engagement, programming and governance, and demonstrate how parks deliver critical public benefits including improved physical and mental health, social cohesion, climate resilience, and economic development.

As Host City Partner, the City would demonstrate its leadership in city park development, including: Indigenous reconciliation, environmental sustainability and neighbourhood improvement in equity-deserving communities. At the same time, the conference aims to provide a forum for tackling the many issues common to parks at municipalities across Canada

The maximum direct financial support would be up to a total of \$25,000 in conference support through the 2023 Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation including various in-kind services and support, such as:

- Logistical services for conference programming held at any City venues, obtained through normal City purchasing procedures and existing contracts when available.
- Transportation services to the study tour sites, potentially including but not limited to TTC Conference Passes, purchased through normal City purchasing procedures.

- Support attendance by members of equity-deserving communities in Toronto through a bursary program administered by Park People.
- Host conference delegates on study tours at various City parks, the list to be developed in collaboration between Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Park People.
- Provide staff support from existing staff resources at City venues used for the conference. Staff support would include, for example, conference speakers, study tour guides at City parks, and logistical support at City venues.

In addition to the invaluable opportunity for City staff to connect with park practitioners from across Canada, and the opportunity the help shape the conference agenda as Host City Partner, the City will receive the following benefits:

- City of Toronto branding on conference events, at conference receptions and the opportunity to showcase City parks through study tours to urban park sites across Toronto.
- City of Toronto brand recognition on Park People's broad-reaching communications including digital and print communications and social media.
- Professional development for staff to deliver conference content, and for City staff to learn from and engage with other Canadian parks professionals.
- Opportunities for Councillors to take part in conference events and receptions and to showcase Toronto's parks systems across Canada.
- The conference would generate economic activity for Toronto through hotel stays, hospitality and travel services.

Park People has reserved Canoe Landing Community Recreation Centre through the normal permitting process as the main conference hub for June 21, 22, and 23, 2023. Canoe Landing will be used each morning for keynote addresses and seminars, while delegates will spend the afternoons on park study tours. Each evening, a reception will be held at a different site which may include facilities located in City parks, e.g. Toronto Island Park.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Janie Romoff  
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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