

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM11.11	ACTION			Ward: 10
---------	--------	--	--	----------

Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds to the Bentway Conservancy to Advance the Development of the Space South of Canoe Landing Park Under the Gardiner Expressway - by Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, seconded by Councillor Gord Perks

** 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

Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, seconded by Councillor Gord Perks, recommends that:

1. City Council amend Parks, Forestry and Recreation's 2023 Capital Budget and 2024-2032 Capital Plan to create a new capital sub-project known as Lands South of Canoe Landing Park in the Park Development project, with a project cost of \$798,970 and future year commitments of \$200,000 gross and \$0 debt in 2024 and \$598,970 gross and \$0 debt in 2025, fully funded by Section 37 (Planning Act Reserve Fund) community benefits collected from 23 Spadina Avenue (Source Account: XR3026-3701142) for the purpose of transferring funds to the Bentway Conservancy to design and undertake public engagement for the space south of Canoe Landing Park under the Gardiner Expressway.
2. City Council authorize the Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation or the General Manager, Transportation Services to execute, on behalf of the City, an agreement with the Bentway Conservancy to fund design work and public engagement in relation to the space south of Canoe Landing Park under the Gardiner Expressway, to a maximum of \$798,970 (inclusive of applicable taxes and charges) on terms and conditions acceptable to the Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation or the General Manager, Transportation Services, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
3. City Council authorize a transfer of Section 37 funds in the amount of \$798,970 to the Bentway Conservancy to fund the design and public engagement related to the space south of Canoe Landing Park under the Gardiner Expressway, with funding from the Lands South of Canoe Landing Park sub-project in the Park Development project, in Parks, Forestry and Recreation's 2023 Capital Budget and 2024-2032 Capital Plan, subject to the Bentway Conservancy entering into an agreement with the Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation or the General Manager, Transportation Services.

Summary

The City of Toronto is committed to improving the quality of life in high-density residential developments and meeting the growing need for new public spaces to serve these communities.

Currently, the City is advancing work on the TOcore Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan and identifying opportunities to secure large parks in and adjacent to the downtown. As this vital network of parks and public spaces continues to grow, the Gardiner/Lake Shore corridor represents a barrier at grade in many areas, limiting the ability to connect priority spaces and access to the waterfront.

For this reason, the expansion of the Bentway (under and adjacent to the Gardiner Expressway) between Dufferin Street and Spadina Avenue has been named by City Council as a priority (see [EX34.4: Priority Downtown Parks and Public Realm Opportunities](#)), alongside other important downtown park projects. Together this network of spaces will serve tens of thousands of residents across the Waterfront, CityPlace and Niagara neighbourhoods.

The Bentway Conservancy's multifunctional Phase 1 space first opened to the public in 2018 and is an expression of Toronto's unique creative energy. The Bentway embraces the potential of the Expressway as "hybrid infrastructure" and optimizes its value as a public asset. While thousands of cars use the highway above, the Gardiner's concrete structure serves as a unique framework for creating a connective series of public spaces and rights of way for city residents.

Over the last five years the Bentway Phase 1 site has become a beloved public amenity for residents and visitors alike, as well as a destination for intriguing and innovative arts, culture, and recreation events. Phase 1 of the Bentway lies on the grounds of Fort York National Historic Site and helps draw in tens of thousands of visitors each year.

Increasingly, the organization is expanding its programming into the local neighbourhood, including a paid 10-year lease on a City-owned space within the Canoe Landing Campus just east of Bentway Phase 1, and a multi-year pilot project under the Gardiner at Dan Leckie Way that explores new ways to leverage storm water runoff from the highway to support urban ecology. As such, the Bentway is well positioned to lead the development and implementation of new under-Gardiner spaces south of Canoe Landing Park.

Working closely with City staff, including Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Transportation Services, as well as other community stakeholders, the Bentway will advance the design of an approximate 120,000 sq.ft. public space that straddles three significant traffic medians along Lake Shore Boulevard, between Dan Leckie Way and Spadina Avenue. This site offers unique opportunities to align with the planned Gardiner Expressway rehabilitation and engage the community in both near-term and long-term public realm improvements.

A major element of this new space is intended to be a large, high-quality off-leash area for dogs to run and socialize within a fence, as well as additional public amenities, performative landscapes and a continuous multi-use path (see [MM42.23: Expanding Canoe Landing Park Under the Gardiner Expressway](#)). As a gateway, the site can greatly improve the experience of accessing the waterfront and link Canoe Landing Park to an emerging network of public spaces, including the Bentway Phase 1 to the west and Bathurst Quay to the south.

City staff, including Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Transportation Services, will work with the Bentway Conservancy and other stakeholders to develop a plan to improve this space, including operational considerations for the various proposed amenities. This next phase of development proposes to commence design studies (ahead of the planned Gardiner deck rehabilitation work in the area), with results used to inform future planning, capital project development, and an expanded partnership between the City of Toronto and the Bentway Conservancy.

This Motion requests authority from City Council to amend Parks, Forestry and Recreation's 2023 Capital Budget and 2024-2032 Capital Plan to create a new project, classified as Growth

Related, with a project cost of \$798,970 and cash flow commitments over 2024-2025, for the purpose of transferring funds to the Bentway Conservancy to design and undertake public engagement for the space south of Canoe Landing Park under the Gardiner Expressway. Of this amount, approximately \$400,000 will be directed towards initial design and public engagement processes, with the balance used to inform the next phase of the projects' detailed design. The cost for implementation, when determined, will be requested through future budget submissions. The project is fully funded by Section 37 community benefit collected from 23 Spadina Avenue that has been received and is eligible for these purposes. In order for the Bentway Conservancy to proceed with the work and for the City to transfer funds to the Bentway Conservancy, authority is required for the Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation or the General Manager, Transportation Services to execute on behalf of the City, an agreement with the Bentway Conservancy on terms and conditions acceptable to the Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, or the General Manager of Transportation Services, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM11.11