

MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Exploring Alternative Governance Models for Biidaasige Park

Moved by: Councillor Fletcher

Seconded by: Councillor Bravo

SUMMARY:

Biidaasige Park is one of Toronto's largest and most significant new parks and public spaces to open in a generation. Brought to life through the tri-government-funded Port Lands Flood Protection Project, its unique scale, design, ecological restoration, public art, and Indigenous placekeeping elements make it a landmark destination and an important piece of social infrastructure. The park will serve residents and visitors for generations while standing as a testament to Toronto's commitment to Reconciliation, Indigenous stewardship, and creating world-class public spaces.

Given the scale of public investment, the deep engagement with multiple stakeholders and partners and the long-term importance of this asset, it is timely and appropriate to explore governance models that could enhance stewardship, programming, operations, and maintenance. Many leading cities have successfully complemented municipal park management through conservancies and other collaborative partnerships that help sustain iconic public spaces. This review would examine whether similar approaches could support the long-term success of Biidaasige Park while complementing the Waterfront Toronto-led, tri-government-funded Early Activation Strategy being implemented on the future Biidaasige Park North and adjacent lands, helping identify opportunities to strengthen programming, partnerships, and the enduring value of the park as the eastern waterfront continues to evolve.

Reason for Urgency: This item is deemed urgent as there are no standing committees scheduled to advance this work in a timely way.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. City Council request the Deputy City Manager, Community and Emergency Services, in consultation with CEO of WATERFRONToronto and in collaboration with the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, the General Manager, Economic Development, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the City Solicitor to review precedents and best practices for alternative models of collaborative park governance in order to create a non-profit park conservancy model for the long-term stewardship and enhancement of Biidaasige Park concurrent with advancement of the tri-government funded Early Activation Strategy; and to facilitate engagement with key stakeholders, including the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Indigenous groups, the Lassonde Art Trail Foundation, and other relevant stakeholders; and report on the findings to the appropriate standing committee in the second half of 2027.