



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Donation from Sir Sandford Fleming College to Parks, Forestry and Recreation – The Children’s Teaching Kitchen

Date:	May 21, 2009
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	General Manager Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 13 - Parkdale-High Park
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council approval to accept an in-kind donation from Sir Sandford Fleming College of Applied Arts and Technology (Fleming College) toward building the High Park Children’s Teaching Kitchen, in accordance with the Policy on Donations to the City for Community Benefits. Since the estimated value of this offer exceeds the \$50,000 threshold for donation acceptance established in the policy, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division requires City Council consent before proceeding with the initiative.

Fleming College is committed to contributing construction supervision and general labour, estimated at \$235,000 in-kind donation towards the building of the kitchen. The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division will oversee the project through to completion. In addition to the in-kind donation, funding for this project was approved in the 2009 Capital Budget. The collaboration will enable significant enhancements to the project, becoming a showcase for green building innovation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. accept the in-kind contribution of construction supervision and general labour, valued at \$235,000.00, provided by Sir Sandford Fleming College of Applied Arts

- & Technology (“Fleming College”) to construct The Children's Teaching Kitchen in High Park (the “Project”);
2. authorize the selection of Fleming College on a sole source basis as a pre-selected subcontractor on the Project;
 3. waive the City’s Fair Wage Policy as it applies to Fleming College as a subcontractor under a City contract; and
 4. authorize the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to enter into appropriate contracts with Fleming College in relation to the contribution, on terms and conditions and satisfactory in form and content to the General Manager and the City Solicitor.

Financial Impact

In 2009, City Council approved funding of \$400,000 in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Capital Budget to construct the Children’s Teaching Kitchen.

Fleming College will provide an in-kind donation of construction supervision and labour towards the construction of the building that is valued at approximately \$235,000.

Initial one-time start-up costs to supply and furnish the facility, in the estimated amount of \$27,700, will be identified by the Division as a pressure in the compilation of its 2010 Operating Budget request.

The annual net operating cost of \$41,869 consisting of \$76,889 in operating expenditures and projected revenue of \$35,020, will be identified as a budget pressure by the Division in its compilation of the 2010 and future years’ Operating Budget requests.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division is planning its first fully sustainable environmentally friendly facility in the City; namely, the Children’s Teaching Kitchen at the High Park Children’s Garden. Due to the special nature of the building and the complexity of the environmentally friendly technology there is a very limited field of candidates both with the design expertise as well as having the knowledge and training to build the facility and install these components.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff contacted Professor Chris Magwood of Fleming College Sustainable Building Design and Construction program to discuss the possibility

of a joint initiative to build the Children's Teaching Kitchen. This program is unique to Canada and is led by Professor Magwood, an industry leader and pioneer. Each year the program provides students theoretical and hands-on experience with leading edge sustainable building practice through the construction of a full scale, public building that incorporates the most current environmentally friendly technologies available. The Children's Teaching Kitchen project is an excellent match for their requirements. The students, professor Magwood and an assistant professor will provide an in-kind donation of construction supervision and labour towards the construction of the building that is estimated to be worth approximately \$235,000.00.

COMMENTS

The High Park Children's Garden is a destination site for many of High Park's 1,000,000 annual visitors. Children's Garden Programs at High Park attract over 5,000 participants annually. For over a decade the City of Toronto's Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto Programs have provided successful, internationally recognized environmental education and recreational opportunities for Toronto residents. The program model has expanded across the city through the support and training that Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto staff provide to other community and recreation centres in Toronto.

The Garden was recognized as one of the Top 60 Public Spaces in the World through the Project for Public Spaces. Awards for the Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto Programs include the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication's Award for Excellence in Environmental Education, finalist in the Green Toronto Awards, Environmental Award of Excellence for the Bob Hunter Environmental Achievement Award and The David Suzuki Digs My Garden Contest, Outstanding Ornamentals.

In order to continue to provide high quality programming to City residents a new education facility is needed. In keeping with the values of the Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto Programs and the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan, the kitchen will be constructed from straw bales. Straw is a waste by-product produced from growing cereal grains. It is renewable, easy to source locally and a very flexible building material. By building with straw bales we can greatly reduce environmental impact compared to conventional building techniques. This includes reducing the carbon footprint of the construction of the building and the carbon footprint of straw disposal. When building, bales are either stacked and plastered to create walls or used as in-fill within a post and beam structure before the wall is plastered. Straw bales have a much higher insulation factor, R35 to R50, than conventional insulation materials usually rated between R12 and R25. Once plastered, straw bale walls are remarkably strong, have a high fire safety rating and provide exceptional sound insulation. Today, many century old straw bale buildings can be found throughout Nebraska and the mid-west providing proof of the durability and longevity of this unique building method.

This facility will be a first for the City of Toronto and help demonstrate the City's commitment to greening our operations. Building the Children's Teaching Kitchen will not only provide the Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto Programs with a site for expansion of current program trends, it will also provide a site to capitalize on future programming trends in the sustainable building and renewable energy fields.

Fleming College Program Coordinator and Professor Chris Magwood is the co-author of three (3) books on straw bale building and has instructed numerous straw bale building workshops, including last year's workshop at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. Professor Magwood, the Assistant Professor and a number of trades people, chosen for their craft proficiency and instructional skill, oversee all work conducted by the students.

Fleming College program's primary goals are to educate students and to construct a facility built with the most advanced sustainable technologies available. The students of the Sustainable Building Design and Construction Program are generally mature individuals having previously earned a degree or diploma. Others have extensive construction experience and many have completed trade apprenticeships. Their enthusiasm for building in a sustainable manner, with conservation of the environment as a top priority, is what draws them to this course.

The City will retain a General Contractor through standard Purchasing and Materials Management Division procedures to act as the Constructor to oversee the project and ensure compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, as well as compliance with various collective agreements to which the City is bound in the construction industry. The General Contractor shall be required to engage Fleming College as a subcontractor to provide construction supervision and general labour for the project.

By requiring the General Contractor to work with Fleming College, the City is pre-selecting a subcontractor on a sole source basis. As Fleming College will be a subcontractor under the City's contract with the General Contractor, the Fair Wage Policy will have to be waived in respect of Fleming College. Schedule "A" to Municipal Code Chapter 67, Fair Wage, ss. 67-A5C allows the conditions of the Fair Wage Policy to be waived by Council.

The Children's Teaching Kitchen will be an enrichment of current Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto Programs delivered by the Parks Branch of Parks, Forestry and Recreation. The funds approved in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2009 Capital Budget in the amount of \$400,000 will be used to hire a general contractor, design and build the structure and supply potable water service to the kitchen.

The Fleming College donation approximated at \$235,000 will add significant value and extend the scope of the approved Capital Budget funds to afford other sustainable components for the kitchen. In particular, the project will be augmented by incorporating a number of innovative green components that, otherwise, would not have been possible, including photovoltaic panels, solar water heating panels, a green living roof, and, if feasible, a small wind turbine.

Building design will start upon approval of this joint initiative. Building construction will commence April, 2010 coinciding with the start of the 2010 class of the Sustainable Building Design and Construction Program.

One-time initial start-up funds will be required in the amount of \$27,700 to supply and furnish this facility (ie., kitchen supplies and equipment, communication networking, cleaning supplies, etc). On an annual basis, it is projected that the kitchen will generate approximately \$35,020 in revenue offering school programs, weekend and evening cooking classes, workshops and camp programming. Total operating expenditures are estimated at \$76,889 leaving a net operating cost of \$41,869. These amounts will be identified as budget pressures by the Parks, Forestry and Recreation in its compilation of the 2010 and 2011 Operating Budget submissions.

The City has an outstanding opportunity to benefit from a donation from Fleming College and the Sustainable Building Design and Construction Program. This program is unique to Canada and provides students with theoretical and hands-on experience with leading edge sustainable building practices through the construction of a full-scale, public building that incorporates the most environmentally friendly options available. Buildings constructed by this program are open to the public as functional, living examples of sustainable technologies. The opportunity exists, with the help of Fleming College's Sustainable Building Design and Construction Program, to create a showcase facility for the City of Toronto.

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SIGNATURE

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