

Community Fundraising for Park Enhancements

Date:	June 4, 2012
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2012\Cluster A\PFR\PE14-061912-AFS#15909

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to the Parks and Environment Committee's request that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation report back on opportunities that enable communities to suggest ideas and fundraise for park enhancement projects and to report on guidelines for the fundraising activities undertaken by community groups in support of park enhancement projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. this report be received for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the receipt of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on March 23, 2012, the Parks and Environment Committee considered a letter submitted by Councillor Paul Ainslie, Ward 43 Scarborough East, recommending that the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division consult with the Toronto Office of Partnerships on:

- a. The creation of a protocol to enable communities to:
 - i. select a specific park enhancement project that is in Parks, Forestry and Recreation Capital Budget, or
 - ii. bring forward a new park enhancement request, subject to the approval of the Parks Forestry and Recreation General Manager.
- b. The creation of guidelines to enable communities to fundraise/donate to a specific park enhancement project.
- c. Guidelines to enable the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division to receive and secure funds which are fundraised/donated for specific park enhancement projects.
- d. The relationship between the park enhancement projects and how it would affect the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division's capital projects list.

The item was referred to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back to the June 19th, 2012 meeting of the Parks and Environment Committee.

Parks and Environment Committee – March 23, 2012 – Item PE11.4
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PE11.4>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

With increasingly frequency, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division (PF&R) receives requests from citizens and community groups across the City for park enhancement projects that fall outside of the approved capital program for the Division.

With a state of good repair backlog approaching \$300 million, the Division's capacity to keep up with new requests for park enhancements from community groups is strained. The PF&R capital program attempts to ensure a balanced approach in the provision of public services to the people of the City of Toronto, while acknowledging the City's current fiscal reality. There is a strong emphasis on state of good repair while, at the same time, recognizing the need to satisfy some demand for growth and service improvement. Each year the PF&R Capital Budget is never enough to provide for all of the Division's capital budget requests. The current limitations on capital targets and allocations do not meet the strategic investments that have been identified through the Division's various strategic plans, nor the needs of Toronto's diverse communities voiced strongly through various community consultation processes.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation's capital program is largely limited to state of good repair with minimal ability to address growth, service enhancements and emerging needs. Of the available debt target assigned for any year, the Division spends approximately 90% on state of good repair.

Community groups recognize these budget limitations and have demonstrated keen interest in becoming more engaged in the funding process and are actively participating in fundraising endeavours to help realize their park enhancement vision. These efforts are shepherded by the PF&R Partnership Development Unit working within the policy framework spearheaded by the Toronto Office of Partnerships.

Community Engagement and Partnerships is one of the seven principles adopted by Council for the development of Parks, Forestry and Recreation's five year Parks Plan, and a reoccurring theme raised in the public and stakeholder consultation and on-line survey. The Parks Plan, anticipated to be completed later this year, will explore creative opportunities to engage community and business partners to complement existing funding through fundraising, partnerships and sponsorships building on the successful opportunities outlined in this report.

COMMENTS

PF&R Partnership Development Unit

Within the Management Services Branch, the PF&R Partnership Development Unit provides assistance to community groups interested in contributing towards park enhancements at their local park. The unit is responsible for growing and maintaining a wide variety of public/private partnership and donation opportunities for the Division and is engaged in developing relationships with other levels of government, various private and public sectors, philanthropic and other funding organizations as well as working with individual citizen donors. The team coordinates grant research and applications, evaluates and actively solicits sponsorships, prepares partnership agreements, and provides support to partnership-driven capital and program projects for the Division. Additionally, the Partnership Development Unit develops marketing and promotional opportunities that enhance the profile of the Division's programs and services.

Over the last four years, the PF&R Partnership Development Unit has maintained an average combined financial and in-kind donation level of \$2.2 million annually. These funds directly support projects requested by communities and division staff and supplement work undertaken by the capital program (Attachment 1). Currently, there are over sixty projects on the unit's approved work plan that include initiatives that range in scope from requests for new playground equipment to sports field improvements, outdoor court and rink refurbishments, park beautification, and tree planting.

A Process for Identification and Approval of Community-driven Park Enhancement Projects

In 2010, Parks, Forestry and Recreation formalized a process whereby community groups and Division staff can identify and garner approval for parks and recreation facility enhancement projects (Attachment 2). The process strives to make the pathway from request to implementation as streamlined as possible. After dialogue with appropriate City staff and the local Councillor to determine the viability of the project, the next step

is the completion of a Partnership Project Application Form which is submitted to the PF&R Partnership Development Unit for review.

The project is vetted by the PF&R senior management team to ensure that the project is aligned with Division objectives and priorities prior to granting approval to add the project to the Partnership Development Unit work plan.

The unit works with community groups to determine the best set of strategies to achieve a successful funding outcome, such as researching and applying for available grants, preparing sponsorship requests, soliciting donations or pursuing other fundraising activities, and lends expertise to drive these efforts forward.

Creation of a Community Fundraising Resource Guide

To better enable communities to identify and bring forward park enhancement requests, the PF&R Partnership Development Unit is presently developing a Community Fundraising Resource Guide that will serve as a 'go to' guide for community groups, city staff and local councillors to utilize when seeking the support of the City of Toronto to identify and fundraise for a new park enhancement project. The guide will take users through the process of engaging with the City of Toronto to undertake their project, and delineates the roles of the City and the community group in the process. Designed with ease of navigation in mind, the guide will be available in both a print and on-line format and is targeted for release in fall 2012.

Managing Donated Funds

The City of Toronto has a variety of options available to assist community groups with their fundraising efforts. The City has a partnership with the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation (TPTF), an established public registered charity that has raised in excess of \$1.7M over the past 10 years. The Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation is solely dedicated to enhancing Toronto's parks and is currently supporting 17 community groups with their park enhancement fundraising efforts by providing an on-line donation portal to receive donations and to hold these in trust until sufficient funding is in place to move the project forward. As a registered charity, the TPTF is able to issue tax receipts for donations received for park enhancement projects.

For larger capital park enhancement projects, a reserve fund can be established through Council approval. The reserve is established to designate money for a specific purpose and use. Donations can be accepted by the City and held in the reserve account until ready to use for the purpose the reserve is set up for. The city can issue tax receipts for donation amounts of \$10 or more.

Not all donations are eligible for a charitable tax receipt. City's policy on eligible tax receipts can be viewed at:

http://insideto.toronto.ca/accounting_services/pdf/accountingdonations_citydivisions.pdf

The reserve funds established for a project outline the disbursement of the funds in cases where the donations received for a large project fail to reach the level that allows the project to be completed.

New On-line Donations and Volunteer Management Software

The City is looking for an integrated enterprise Donation and Volunteer Management Solution that will meet the requirements of City. The enterprise solution will be used by all City divisions and will allow the City to provide the public with an accessible, easy to use, web-enabled Solution where they can learn about, engage with, and contribute to initiatives across the City. The solution will allow divisions to create campaigns for specific causes and locations, automate the issue of tax receipts and thank you letters and accumulate donations for the specific purpose until sufficient funds are available to implement the project. An RFP for this web-based solution will be released in summer 2012 and it is anticipated that the new on-line tool will roll out in 2013. The solution will supplement current fundraising partnerships through various community based not for profit charities.

Working with the "Park People" Organization to Develop "Friends of" Park Groups

Since its formation in early 2011, Park People: the Toronto Alliance for Better Parks, has demonstrated value as a partner of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division to promote the importance of parks and to assist citizens to engage in their local park through the development and networking of park friends groups. Park People has recently published a Park Friends Group Guidebook to assist this effort.

Project Management and Relationship to the PF&R Capital Program

While having increased interest and success in procuring donations to the City for park enhancement projects is welcome and an increasingly important part of city-building, funds raised by City staff and community groups does place additional pressure on the capital projects plan.

Wherever possible, the Division encourages donations for projects that already exist in capital budget. Donations help enhance projects with additional equipment or features that might not otherwise be added due to cost restrictions. Where a project is not listed in PF&R's capital project plan, full funding for the project must be established before a project can be entered into the Division's plan. In these cases, depending on the size of the project, reserve funds are established to receive and hold funds raised or a trust is set up with the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation or other community foundation for the specific project. There may be instances where, due to a high volume of approved projects and a short construction season, park enhancement projects that are not part of the approved capital project must be held or phased over multiple years. A report to Council is required to amend the Capital Budget before the project can proceed.

All projects are required to demonstrate that there are no additional operating impacts from the capital investment beyond the level associated with the Capital project or that the impacts can be absorbed by the division.

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SIGNATURE

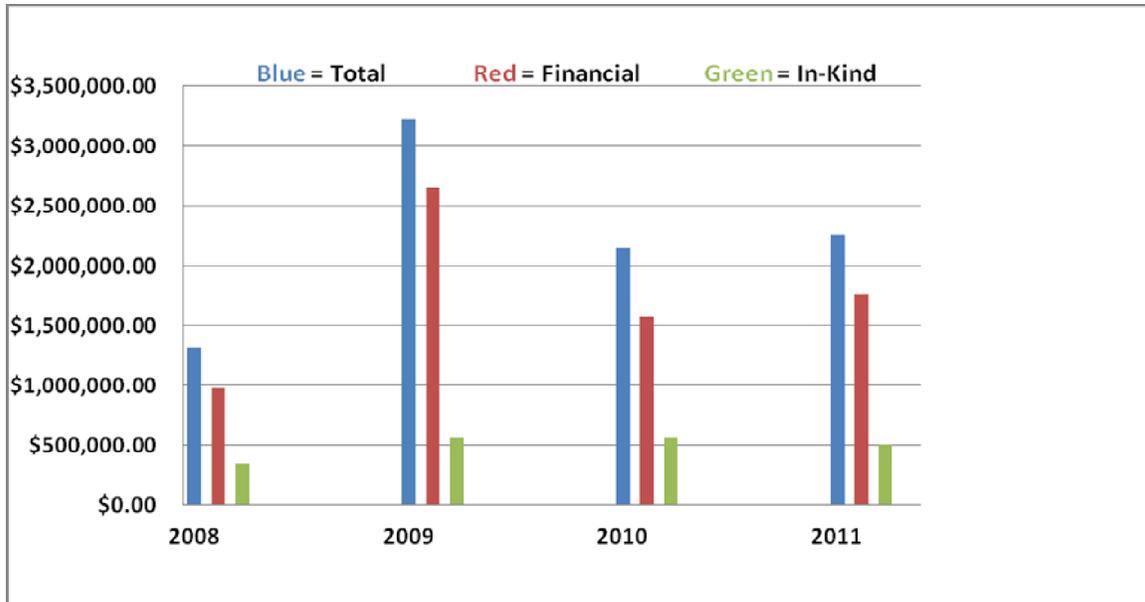
Jim Hart
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – PF&R Partnership Development Donation Summary: 2008-2011
Attachment 2 – PF&R Partnership Development Process for Community Park/Facility
Rejuvenation Projects

ATTACHMENT 1

PF&R Partnership Development Donation Summary: 2008-2011



Partnership Project Highlights

- \$2.3 million donation from the MLSE Team Up Foundation to refurbish arenas and outdoor rinks during the period 2009-2013.
- \$1 million private citizen donation to build a sensory garden and accessible waterplay area in Earl Bales Park in 2009.
- Jays Care Foundation donation of \$150,000 toward installation of new lights at Stan Wadlow Park and \$175,000 for a new backstop and infield refurbishment at Smythe Park in 2011.
- \$300,000 donation from the TD Bank Group in support of the Franklin Children's Garden on Toronto Island for 2011-2015
- Working with the Embrace Martingrove Gardens community group, facilitated a \$50,000 playground refurbishment through the TVO Kids television show, "Giver" in 2011.
- Soccer pitch refurbishments at G Ross Lord Park and Sorauren Park made possible with donations from the MLSE Team Up Foundation in 2010 and 2011.
- Over \$500,000 in donations to support tree planting efforts during the period 2009 – 2011

ATTACHMENT 2

PF&R Partnership Development Process for Community Park/Facility Enhancement Projects

1. Community Group Identifies Need for Park or Facility Enhancement

- Contact their local Park / Facility Supervisor / Local Councillor to discuss merits and feasibility of proposed enhancement.
- Is the location / project on the approved capital project list? (10 yr capital project plan)
- Community Group completes Partnership Project application form and submits to PDU
- Site meeting with PDU staff, Group Key Contact and other City staff stakeholders (e.g. Parks Planner/Landscape Arch)

2. PDU prepares Partnership Project Briefing Note for Review and Approval by PF&R Senior Management Team

- Senior Management approval triggers the project to be added to the PDU workplan
- PDU staff begin investigation of potential funding options (grant, sponsorship, etc).
- Community Group formalizes as a Not-for-Profit and/or enlists partnership support of a charitable not for profit (e.g. Toronto Parks & Trees Foundation) Obtains letters of support from appropriate other local organizations.
- Depending on scale of project, a staff report to garner Council Support and reserve fund may be required

3. Funding Partner Commitment to Project

- Is donation amount less than \$50,000.00? General Manager has delegated approval to receive and spend donation.
- Is donation greater than \$50,000.00? Council Authority is required to accept and spend donation.
- Obtaining Council Authority requires an approved staff report to go through the appropriate Committee and then City Council (This process is typically 2-3 months in duration).

4. Council or GM Approval Granted for Project to Proceed

- Convene kick-off meeting with project management team.
- Project Charter Drafted, Project Team Identified.
- Landscape Architect / Capital Project Coordinator Assigned.
- Agreements prepared and executed in Conjunction with City Legal Department
- Procurement Process Initiated

5. Project Build / Volunteer Component / Launch Event

- Is there a volunteer component to the project (e.g. tree planting, mulch, planters, etc.)
- Coordinate planning of launch event
- Ceremonial component (VIPs, ribbon cutting, etc.)
- Donor recognition