

Clause embodied in Report No. 2 of the Economic Development and Parks Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on March 1, 2 and 3, 2004.

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Framework for Aligning Strategic Goals and Service Levels with Organizational Review in the Parks and Recreation Division (All Wards)

(City Council on March 1, 2 and 3, 2004, amended this Clause by adding the following:

“It is further recommended that the Framework for Aligning Strategic Goals and Service Levels with Organizational Review in the Parks and Recreation Division consider, and endeavour to be consistent with, the emerging City Council policies and objectives, such as the Community Safety Plan, the Clean and Beautiful City Initiative, the Environmental Plan and the Children and Youth Initiative.”)

The Economic Development and Parks Committee recommends the adoption of the following report (January 28, 2004) from the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, subject to amending Recommendation No. (1) to read:

“(1) Council approve the establishment of a Parks and Recreation Council Steering Committee consisting of interested Members of the Economic Development and Parks Committee, including the Chair and Vice Chair, the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism and the Acting General Manager of Parks and Recreation, with a mandate as outlined in the report;”:

Purpose:

To inform Council on the process for the operational review of the Parks and Recreation Division that commences with public consultation and input on strategic directions, service priorities/service levels, and principles for organizational design.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement :

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report, however, the 2004 recommended operating budget includes a \$1 million reduction as a result of the exit of 10 employees through early retirements at the end of 2003 based on the previous restructuring plan. Further savings in 2005 of \$1.5 million may be possible depending on the outcome of the review and the timing of the implementation.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Council approve the establishment of a Parks and Recreation Council Steering Committee consisting of four members of the Economic Development and Parks Committee, including the Chair and Vice Chair, the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism and the Acting General Manager of Parks and Recreation with a mandate as outlined in the report;
- (2) Council approve the establishment of a Parks and Recreation Stakeholder Reference Group comprised of 10 to 12 residents from a cross-section of the City as outlined in the report; and
- (3) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department commenced a restructuring of the Parks and Recreation Division in the fall of 2003. The process was accelerated due to budget pressures and requirements to ensure the budget reductions would be fully implemented in 2004 and to take advantage of the OMERS early retirement window that was closing on December 31, 2003.

The previous restructuring proposal was linked to meeting budget targets versus service and strategic directions. The restructuring was placed on hold by the Commissioner and the Chief Administrative Officer due to concerns raised by Councillors related to the need for more consultations. The Commissioner was requested to bring forward a report to the Economic Development and Parks Committee in February 2004 on the process to be utilized.

This report will outline a process for aligning strategic directions, priority service level review with organizational change.

Comments:

Toronto Parks and Recreation's mission is to ensure that people in Toronto's diverse communities have full and equitable access to high-calibre, locally responsive recreation programs, efficiently operated facilities, safe, clean and beautiful parks, open spaces, ravines and forests.

The Division manages and operates 1,460 named parks, 140 community centres, aquatic facilities, including 70 indoor pools and 64 outdoor pools, 50 arenas, 54 outdoor artificial ice rinks, five ferry boats, five public golf courses, two ski hills, 7,488 hectares of green space, 839 sports fields, 756 tennis sites and 833 playgrounds. The Department is the City's custodian of three million public trees and 200 kilometres of trails. More than 400,000 people take part in registered recreation programs, and 2.6 million enjoy drop-in opportunities, including swimming and skating.

The Process:

The Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department will restart the Organizational Development and Review of Parks and Recreation Services with the engagement of staff, public and Council to discuss strategic directions, and service levels. The rationale is that “form follows function”.

There is a need to incorporate priority setting and service level evaluation as a component of the public consultation and provide the public with an opportunity to input on the principles for Organizational Design.

In summary public consultation for the purposes of:

- (1) Strategic Plan – agreement on strategic directions;
- (2) Priorities and Service Level Expectations; and
- (3) Input on Organizational Design Principles.

The process incorporates the tremendous work that has been underway within the division over the past year related to developing a Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, and a three-year Business Plan. It is recommended that the process commence internally with staff across all levels of the organization undertaking to prepare information and documents to guide the public input process on the three areas noted above. Then the public input process would engage our stakeholders and users of our services across the City to share and communicate their priorities on service levels and their views on the key strategic directions the division should achieve over both the short-term and long-term.

After the public process, Economic Development and Parks Committee will be presented with a Strategic Plan and Service Level Priorities. Following Council approval of the Strategic Plan, staff will commence the task of aligning organization structures to the Strategic Plan and completion of Business Plans and related organization development plans such as: People Plan - Training and Skills Development Plan, ongoing Stakeholder Management Plan and financial and operational reporting systems.

Rationale for Commencing New Process:

The rationale for commencing a new process that will connect strategic directions to service levels that connect to organizational changes, structure and business plans was based on numerous reasons and factors. However, they can be summarized into three areas: Financial, Changing Demographic and Societal Forces and Alignment of Council approved sector plans and policies.

Financially, all City services are challenged by the limitations of affordability and the lack of financial tools to finance cities of which parks and recreation is no exception. The size and scope of the operation merits review of how and what services are delivered.

Changing demographics and Societal Forces are impacting on service delivery expectations and needs. After six years of operations the Division needs to assess who and how they are reaching stakeholders. With the increase in inactivity among youth, Parks and Recreation needs to be leading the call to action and engaging people of Toronto of all ages to become physically active. Widening income gaps and the growth of “at risk” population in Toronto also calls for enhanced intervention of Parks and Recreation services. Therefore, the time is right to undertake strategic planning and service level/priority setting with the public.

Additionally, Council approved strategies such as the Official Plan, Environmental Plan, Social Plan, Culture Plan, and the Economic Development Strategy all impact on service levels and expectations of the Parks and Recreation Division. Further Council policies, for example, such as pesticide use have a direct impact on staffing, costs, service levels, training, and skills upgrading of staff and more importantly managing the expectation of the public as a result of limited resources to implement properly.

Therefore, the relevance of an organizational review remains appropriate and is a priority for the Parks and Recreation Division in 2004. However, it would be done only following the undertaking of a public consultation process that assesses priorities and service levels. Six years into amalgamation is an opportune time for Parks and Recreation to examine its operation and approach to delivery on priorities through community engagement and partnerships. It is time to review organizational practices, so that the Division can move forward with strength and confidence.

Process Overview and Timeframes:

Overall Objective:

Engage our stakeholders, staff and Council in a process to review the vital services provided under the stewardship of Parks and Recreation, for the purposes of understanding the public’s expectations, and recognizing Council’s fiscal limitations which would lead to the alignment of our services and delivery mechanisms in order to achieve positive impacts on the quality of life our citizens deserve.

Goals:

- (i) Priority Setting - service level agreement;
- (ii) Effectiveness – Service valuation;
- (iii) Efficiencies – how and what services are delivered and how much they cost to deliver;
- (iv) Alignment of Strategic Directions to Structure and Business Plans;
- (v) Staff Engagement and Involvement – seek input and involve in process;
- (vi) Public Input - Strategic Directions, Priorities, Organizational Design Principles; and
- (vii) Recognition of ‘diversity of facilities, needs, and communities’.

Expected Outcomes and Deliverables:

The expected outcomes of this process will include the following documents and processes: Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan; Service Levels/Priorities – directions approved by Council; Organizational Response –Structural Options; Financial and Operational Information Systems – Alignment of existing and new systems; Stakeholder Engagement Plan; Three-Year Business Plan; People Plan – Skills and Training Plan.

Process Phases – Aligning Strategic Directions and Service Priorities:

Phase One: Staff and Stakeholder Engagement ;
Phase Two: Public Input and Consultations;
Phase Three: Evaluation and Assessment ;
Phase Four: Organization Design; and
Final Phase: Alignment to Work/Business Plans.

Phase One: Staff and Stakeholder Engagement - February and March 2004

Phase One seeks to communicate the process to stakeholders, Council and staff. Background work will take place on developing a detailed critical path. Further activities will include refining the strategic directions document, developing a framework for a service level and priority review and drafting principles for sound organizational design. Staff support teams will be developed and will be provided an orientation. Preliminary individual stakeholder interviews will take place as consultations with support divisions and other City Departments.

Phase Two: Public Input and Consultations – April and May 2004

The public consultations will focus on achieving three major elements: Strategic Directions, Priority Service and Service Level Expectations, and agreement on the Principles for Organizational Design. Input will be sought from a broad spectrum of users, volunteers, community groups, Council Members, advisory committees, sporting and environmental groups, and youth themselves. It is envisioned that eight to 10 roundtable discussion meetings will take place throughout the City with the Council Reference Group providing leadership. A mechanism will also be established in order for groups and individuals to provide written submissions.

Phase Three: Summarize Key Findings – Evaluation and Assessment – June 2004

Phase Three will seek to compile and prepare the following key deliverables to the Economic Development and Parks Committee: Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, Priority Services and Service Level Expectations, and Principles for Organizational Design. Report to the July 2004 Economic Development and Parks Committee meeting.

Key Roles:

The following two groups will be established to assist staff with the process: Parks and Recreation Council Steering Committee and Parks and Recreation Stakeholder Reference Group. The Council Steering Committee would have responsibility for guiding and advising staff

throughout the whole process and the Stakeholder Advisory Group would provide advice and guidance related only to the Strategic Plan, and Service Level Priorities including the consultation process. It is recommended that the Reference Group be comprised of 10 to 12 residents (stakeholders) reflective of city demographics, key community groups, advisory councils, geographic districts, area specific interests – environmental, parks, sporting, and youth and seniors.

Staff engagement will be paramount to the achievement of the timetable and to ensure a smooth implementation, therefore, there will be a series of staff teams and direct involvement of staff across the organization. In addition, regular communication and involvement of both unions (Local 416 and 79) will occur throughout the process.

Conclusions:

Parks and Recreation Services play a vital role in the quality of life of Torontonians. Programs and services contribute to child and youth development, life long health and wellness and environmental protection/stewardship. The re-engagement of a process to review the organization must start at first principles with the creation of a Strategic Plan that outlines priorities and communicates service level expectations. The process outlined in this report is motivated by the need to manage expectations and resources more effectively and to ensure clarity of purpose for all staff engaged in providing such valuable services to the people of Toronto.

An organizational response would occur as a result of the Strategic Plan and Service Priorities (Service Level) being agreed on by Council. Staff will ensure an alignment of all organizational operations including structure – how services delivered, business plans, financial and information reporting systems, staff skills development and training, and performance indicators and benchmarks.

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