



City of
Peterborough

To: **Members of the Committee of the Whole**

From: **Jeffrey Humble, Director, Planning and Development Services**

Meeting Date: **September 25, 2017**

Subject: **Report PLPD17-043**
Precommit of 2018 Capital Budget: Natural Heritage Policy
Update and Harper Park Plan

Purpose

A report outlining the scope and budget implications of an update to the City's Natural Heritage Official Plan Policies, including the completion of a Harper Park Plan that assesses of the wetland complex, passive recreational opportunities, and potential use of employment lands.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report PLPD17-043 dated September 25, 2017 of the Director, Planning and Development Services, as follows:

- a) That \$225,000 be precommitted in the 2018 Capital Budget to retain an environmental consultant to carry out an update to the City Natural Heritage Official Plan policies as part of the Official Plan update, which will include the completion of a Harper Park Management Plan; and
- b) That Beacon Environmental be retained to complete the Natural Heritage Policy update and Harper Park Management Plan at a cost of \$200,000.00, plus HST of \$26,000.00.

Budget and Financial Implications

Approval of this Report will pre-commit \$225,000 to the 2018 Planning Division Capital Budget.

Section 9.1.2.i of Purchasing By-law 14-127 applies when a competitive procurement process is not required "When a Consultant has been used to provide a service, and additional work is required that builds upon or is dependent upon the previous work undertaken and when it could not reasonably be determined at the time the original work was approved that additional services would be required." The Director of Corporate Services has approved that this circumstance exists for this work and the non-competitive procurement is permitted.

Background

At the June 5, 2017, City Council meeting the following resolution was passed:

"That Council direct staff to bring forward a report outlining the scope and 2018 budget implications of a Harper Park Watershed Management Plan that would include a Harper Park Wetland Complex; and

That in conjunction with the study, staff also consider the potential uses of the employment lands in the vicinity of Harper Park."

Harper Park Area

Throughout the Casino land use and site plan approval process, there was a significant amount of discussion around the surrounding environmental factors in the Harper Park area. The Harper Park area is a large natural area located at the main "Gateway" to the City at the Highway 115 / The Parkway interchange. It is an environmental sanctioned area as it contains a provincially significant wetland feature, localized cold water fisheries and a local brook trout population. In 1997, the City, in partnership with the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority, completed a subwatershed study for Harper Creek, a cold water fishery, and the Harper Park wetland, which was a locally significant wetland at the time. The Subwatershed Study served as the basis for the Lansdowne Street West Secondary Plan which provided a blueprint for future development in this key "gateway" area to the City.

There has been a great deal of discussion taking place and concerns raised on possible impacts to the environmental feature of the area with the recent development pressures occurring in the immediate area. With the development of the Shoreline Casino, readjustment and possible urbanization of area roads, proposals development along Lansdowne Street West and potential passenger rail service to Peterborough, it has become evident that an update to the 1991 Subwatershed Study is required to support

future land use decisions in the Harper park area. The Harper Park Management Plan, which will include the Harper Park wetland complex, opportunities for passive recreation, and will be instrumental in determining additional developable lands for employment uses while being sensitive to the unique natural environment in the immediate area.

Natural Heritage Policy Update

An updated Natural Heritage Systems section of the Official Plan is a critical element of the Official Plan update. Given the legislation changes to the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe areas the past several years, and the ever increasing priority that this control environment has become to the community, it is being recommended that the City retain the services of an environmental consultant to lead the update of the natural heritage policies for the Official Plan update. An environmental expert with experience in developing natural heritage systems and supporting policy will be better equipped to recommend a natural heritage system and policies that are based on best practice, founded on relevant science and will withstand legal challenge.

Beacon Environmental

Beacon Environmental is a well known environmental consultant with several offices in Ontario, including one in Peterborough. They have worked on several recent projects within the city, and for the City, including providing professional advice regarding the Loggerhead Marsh and upcoming Ontario Municipal Board hearing on the Batten – White subdivision, as well as serving as the City environmental advisor throughout the Casino land use planning approvals and the Site Plan approval. Beacon's participation in the Site Plan Approval process which included significant consultation with the citizen group (Casino Watershed Task Force) was critical in the approval of the Site Plan.

Beacon is very familiar with the Harper Park area and its environmental sensitivities and one of the principles, Brian Henshaw, who would lead the project, was with the firm which completed the 1997 Harper Creek Subwatershed Study. Mr. Henshaw is a well respected professional in the environmental field and has also completed several natural Heritage Systems reviews and updates for municipal clients.

Public Engagement

Public engagement will be a key component of the Harper Park and Natural Heritage planning initiatives. Staff have continued discussions with members of the Peterborough Field Naturalists ("Casino Watershed Task Force") who have expressed interest in ongoing engagement. The process will accommodate their involvement in addition to consulting with adjacent property owners around Harper Park. The Official Plan Working Group has been informed of the Natural Heritage initiative and will provide continued input into the process and Plan. Opportunities for broader public participation on both initiatives will be provided to garner broad public support.

Summary

Securing the preapproval of the necessary funding to retain Beacon Environmental provides the opportunity for Beacon to initiate the Harper Park Watershed Management Plan to take advantage of the full season for field work, while the casino site will be under construction and while the Webber Avenue / Rye Street Class Environmental Assessment is being completed. The timing also coordinates well with the Official Plan update which is in the policy development and consultation phase of the project.

Therefore it is recommended that \$225,000.00 be pre-approved for the Planning Division 2018 Capital Budget and that Beacon Environmental be retained to complete the update to the City's natural Heritage Official Plan Policies and the Harper Park Watershed Management Plan.

Submitted by,

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