



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** Members of the Arena, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

**From:** Sue Warrington, Arena Division Manager

**Meeting Date:** June 15, 2021

**Subject:** Report APRAC21-013  
Parks and Open Space Implementation Plan

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## **Purpose**

To provide an update on the Parks and Open Space Study and corresponding plan to implement the recommendations previously approved by Council.

## **Recommendations**

That the Arena, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee approve the recommendations outlined in Report APRAC21-013, dated June 15, 2021, of the Arena Division Manager, as follows:

- a) That Report APRAC21-013 by the Arena Division Manager be received for information;
- b) That the Arena, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee endorse the implementation strategies identified in this report.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

There are no budget or financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report. The next step will be to present to Council the implementation strategies outlined in this report and recommendations for specific projects to be approved as part of the 2022 Budget process in alignment with the recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Study.

## **Background**

The Assessment of Parks and Open Space study began in July 2018 to provide a comprehensive review of the City's parks and open space system and to establish a park planning process as identified in Vision 2025, a Ten-Year Strategy for Recreation, Parks, Arenas and Culture. This study concluded in October 2019 resulting in The Municipal Parks and Open Space Study Final Report that was presented to the Arena, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee through Report APRAC19-019 dated October 22, 2019 for endorsement prior to the final presentation to Council through Report CSRS20-003 dated February 3, 2020. Council received the final presentation and adopted in principle the Assessment of Parks and Open Spaces document and the Park Development Standards document to be used to develop policies and guide priorities related to the development of municipal parks and open space.

Requests for park improvements and new outdoor park facilities from members of the community are received on a regular basis by City staff and Councillors, even more frequently over the past year as a result of heightened restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in very limited community activities taking place. With more focus on community parks, it is important to formally set out a strategy that provides a clear plan of action to implement the parks planning process adopted through the Parks and Open Space Study and provide a process for addressing new requests. Additional planning for the next step in the process is required regarding outdoor park facilities. A review and assessment of existing outdoor recreation facilities and park enhancements and the corresponding creation of a Recreation Master Plan and implementation strategy is also required to be undertaken.

### **Implementation of the Recommendations in the Plan**

The Parks and Open Space Study identified two main areas as priorities for action: i) rejuvenation of Neighbourhood parks to ensure equity across the community; and ii) the acquisition of new or designation of City-owned land as parkland. To address these priorities and create an action plan for the tasks involved, a staff team has been created consisting of the Recreation Division/Peterborough Sport and Wellness Centre Manager, Arena Division Manager, two Urban Design Planners and the Project Manager Facilities and Planning Initiatives. Using the recommendations and tools provided, the staff team propose the following approach to effectively manage the priorities identified in the Study:

#### **1. Priority Neighbourhood Parks Rejuvenation Plan**

The Assessment of Parks and Open Spaces document sets out the current state of the parks to be rejuvenated and recommends solutions to improve access to and quality of the existing parkland. The review involved the assessment of the quality and functionality of the City's 79 existing Neighbourhood parks (including 12 embedded Neighbourhood parks within higher level parks). This list of minimum park features is the requirement for new parks and provides the template for upgrading existing parks. This list of minimum standards was prepared for

Neighbourhood park features and facilities and was developed during the Study with input from the Municipal Steering Committee, First Nations representatives, stakeholders and the general public. The plan to systematically improve existing neighbourhood parks utilizes the 'minimum' and 'variable' design features and standards for rejuvenation recommended in the Assessment of Parks and Open Spaces document and the Parks Development Standards document. In order to expedite this rejuvenation process, this plan includes the request to acquire one additional staff member dedicated to parks rejuvenation in year 2 of the plan (2023).

- a) Annual Municipal Capital Budget request for "Neighbourhood Parks Refurbishment Plan" to bring the parks to at least the minimum standard identified in the Study:
  - i. Group 1 – approximate 3-year process: Requires one additional staff member in year 2 (2023). Begin with a refurbishment plan for the top 10 Neighbourhood parks identified as the highest priority (two parks in 2022 and four parks per year 2023-2024);
  - ii. Group 2 – approximately 8-year process: Continue with a refurbishment plan for 33 Neighbourhood parks that scored in the bottom third of the "quality/functionality" assessment, the balance of the original 43 Neighbourhood parks (4 parks per year 2025-2032);
  - iii. Group 3 – approximately 9-year process: Continue with a refurbishment plan for 36 Neighbourhood parks, the balance of the City's 79 existing Neighbourhood parks (including 12 embedded Neighbourhood parks within higher level parks) (2033-2041)

The plans created for the Neighbourhood park refurbishments will be submitted as an application to access additional funds from the Tollington Parks Endowment Fund to supplement the Municipal Capital Budget and allow for additional refurbishments that will be required to bring the parks up to a reasonable and accessible standard.

The Neighbourhood Parks Refurbishment Plan will be an ongoing capital project budget request carried forward annually allowing funds to be rolled over and applied to future projects as required.

- b) Project Website Development - Clear Communication and Community Consultation throughout the creation and implementation of the Neighbourhood park rejuvenation plans:
  - i. Creation of a Neighbourhood Park Rejuvenation Plan project website on connect.ptbo to highlight features of the Parks and Open Space Study and include all documentation and corresponding implementation plan;
  - ii. Provide details on how to submit a park rejuvenation or new park request and how to check to see where an existing park is identified on the priority list including the procedure for presentation of new ideas to the Arena, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee;

- iii. Provide details of each Neighbourhood park identified for rejuvenation and expected date for completion;
  - iv. Provide details of the community consultation process to be undertaken for each park identified, noting the portion of the project that will be subject to consultation;
  - v. Provide details on how to locate or create a “Community Stewardship Group” in your area.
- c) Capital Budget Request – Outdoor Park Facilities Study in 2023
- i. Engage a consultant to perform a review and assessment of existing outdoor recreation facilities and park enhancements (i.e. skateboard parks, tennis and basketball courts, disc golf, ball diamonds and fields, etc.).
  - ii. Creation of a Recreation Master Plan and implementation strategy to prioritize outdoor park facility and park enhancement projects and obtain Council approval of the plan and strategy.

## **2. Strategy to Plan, Acquire and Develop Parkland**

Through the development of the parks and open space plan, the classification system was aligned with the City’s Official Plan revision to expand to five classifications:

1. Regional Parks
2. Community Parks
3. Neighbourhood Parks
4. Pocket Parks
5. Urban Park Spaces

The Assessment of Parks and Open Space document states that Peterborough has an above average number of providers of public and publicly available open space as well as culture and recreation facilities. Because of this and the City’s setting and natural features, the amount of public and publicly available open space is above normal but will not support a high level of public use and facility development due to the fact a good deal of the land is natural heritage in nature. There are currently 149 (non-park) City-owned space/properties, some of which have been designated for specific uses (i.e. road right-of-way, surface drainage corridors, etc.) with most of the land not officially designated for any particular use, including parkland. A good deal of the land has been acquired as ‘open space’ (often referred to as ‘environmental protection’ lands) through residential, commercial and industrial development. Due to the natural heritage nature of many of the properties, most have not been designated as ‘parkland’. Some of the City-owned open space comprises retired railway lines and, although they are intended for trails, they have not yet been formally designated as parkland. Some of the open space lands that have been acquired over the years parallel the Otonabee River and other properties contain other watercourses

The connection between Neighbourhood parks and the city-wide trail and active transportation is generally weak even though there is an improving network of linked open spaces and trails at the city-wide level. Although there are many quality Regional and Community parks, much of this land is comprised of natural heritage features. As a result, there is a shortage of medium and large size tableland-quality Regional and Community parks that can accommodate the outdoor and indoor culture and recreation facilities that will be required as the City grows. An additional 50-75 hectares of this type of open space will be required to support resident future needs. A strategy is required to address this challenge while opportunities still exist.

In the Study, the 149 properties were evaluated and prioritized using criteria developed by the consulting team and Project Steering Committee. There were a number of criteria used to support a City-owned (non-parkland) open space property to be recommended for consideration to become parkland (such as “the site is a candidate to help alleviate a current or future gap in access to Neighbourhood parkland”) in addition to considerations that may preclude a City-owned (non-parkland) open space property from being recommended for consideration to become parkland (such as “there is another use(s) identified and/or anticipated for the site that would preclude consideration of the site for parkland”). Fifteen of the 149 properties were not recommended as candidates to be considered for parkland, 24 properties are rated ‘low’ priority, 15 properties are rated ‘medium’ priority and 95 properties are rated ‘high’ priority, with 72 identified as ‘high-high’. The results of the Study include the recommendation that all properties that have been identified as candidates for parkland be considered to officially become parkland. As an implementation strategy, properties that are ranked ‘high-high’ and ‘high’ should be considered first. Properties that are identified in the evaluation matrix as ‘neighbourhood’, ‘community’ and ‘regional’ in significance, should be classified as Neighbourhood, Community and Regional parks.

Utilizing the information, recommendations and tools included in the Study staff will prepare a plan to obtain:

- a) Council Designation of City-owned land as parkland
- b) Council Designation of specific City-owned parkland as “Nature Preserves or Reserves”
- c) Capital Budget Project Request to purchase parkland

### **Current Status of the Neighbourhood Parks Rejuvenation Plan**

In February 2020, Council adopted in principle the Assessment of Parks and Open Spaces document and the Park Development Standards document to be used to develop policies and guide priorities related to the development of municipal parks and open space. The initial plan was for staff to begin to work through the list of parks identified as the top priorities for Neighbourhood park rejuvenation in 2020 and 2021 and make a request to obtain funds from the Tollington Parks Endowment Fund to

proceed. Through the 2020 and 2021 Budget process, no municipal capital funds were requested although the project to rejuvenate six Neighbourhood parks was put forward to Council. There was a change in Corporate priorities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and these projects were not initiated and funds were not received from the Tollington Trust. The strategy to convert wading pools in existing parks with splash pad features has continued to be advanced during this period with approved municipal capital funds, including the current splash pad project at Hamilton Park, also identified in the top 10 highest priority parks for rejuvenation.

Staff are in the process of creating a plan for Neighbourhood park refurbishment for the 10 highest priority parks identified in the Study and including a 2022 Capital Budget request for the refurbishment of the first two parks on the list. Application will also be made to Scotia Wealth Management, on behalf of the Tollington Trustees, to approve a disbursement from the Tollington Parks Endowment Fund. Through the study, the consultants developed a specific strategy to improve neighbourhood park equity in each of the City's residential planning areas. In the study, 79 Neighbourhood parks were identified for rejuvenation establishing 10 highest priority parks for rejuvenation utilizing the factors comprising park equity to augment the quality/functionality assessment:

1. Cameron Tot lot
2. Earlwood
3. Keith Wightman
4. Dominion
5. Hamilton (imbedded neighbourhood park portion)
6. Glenn Pagett
7. Whitefield
8. Dainard
9. Denne
10. Queen Alexandra (Plus Nicholls Place Pocket Park)

The priority list was created using the goal of Park Equity = Access (to parkland) + Quality (of parks) + Inclusivity (the degree to which ALL residents can access parks and open spaces). The implementation plan for park rejuvenation follows the priority list identified. As Council has adopted in principle the Assessment of Parks and Open Spaces document and the Park Development Standards document to be used to develop policies and guide priorities related to the development of municipal parks and open space, all requests regarding parks will be referenced in conjunction with the priority list to estimate the date to which the park rejuvenation or creation of a new park would be recommended.

### **History of the Tollington Parks Endowment Fund**

The Tollington Parks Endowment Fund was established in 1996 by Gordon Tollington, a citizen of Peterborough, to provide financial resources to improve public parkland. The Endowment Fund Agreement clearly articulates the intent and use of the Fund as follows:

- To keep invested the TOLLINGTON PARKS ENDOWMENT FUND or the amount thereof remaining from time to time and to pay there from annually so much of the income as, in the discretion of the Trustees, is required or beneficial for the maintenance, improvement, beautification, operation and expansion of public parks open to members of the public without charge, and to include but not be limited to open parkland, public zoological or botanical gardens, waterfront parks and general recreational areas and facilities located in the municipal boundaries of the Corporation of the City of Peterborough as they may exist from time to time.
- It is not the intention of the Settlor that the income from the TOLLINGTON PARKS ENDOWMENT FUND shall operate so as to relieve the taxpayers of the City of Peterborough of normal budgetary payments for Parks purposes as provided in the years gone by, but to, in fact, supplement the income of the City so as to provide a high standard of park services to the people of the City of Peterborough
- The Trustees shall not be required to expend all of the income from the TOLLINGTON PARKS ENDOWMENT FUND annually and in the event that all of the net income from the TOLLINGTON PARKS ENDOWMENT FUND is not expended in any year, the same may, in the Trustees discretion, either be capitalized or expended as income in the following year or years provided that any income not expended within five years from the date of its receipt shall, in any event be capitalized, and provided that after a date of twenty-one (21) years from the date of the death of the Settlor all income shall be paid to the City and used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraph (a)...
- The Trustees may, in their absolute discretion, after twenty (20) years from the date of this agreement, pay all or such part as they think fit of the capital of the TOLLINGTON PARKS ENDOWMENT FUND to the City for the purpose of the acquisition and development of additional Public parks or making improvements to existing public parks within the then existing municipal boundaries for the City or its successors.

From its inception in 1996, the Tollington Parks Endowment Fund has provided funding support for the Tollington Bridge in Beavermead Park, the Rotary Trail Bridge at Trent University, and the Water Play facilities at Rogers Cove and Kinsmen Park, the signalized pedestrian trail crossing at Parkhill Road and formalized four access trails along the Rotary Greenway Trail.

In accordance with the Trust Agreement, all projects funded by the Endowment must meet with the approval of City Council and the Trustees of the Endowment Fund. The last expenditure of income was in 2019 in the amount of \$120,000 from the 2017-2018 Tollington Parks Endowment Fund to formalize four access trails along the Rotary Greenway Trail located at Frances Stewart Road, Lisburn Street, Moir Street and Vinette Street.

## Summary

In February 2020, Council adopted in principle of the Assessment of Parks and Open Spaces document and the Park Development Standards document to be used to develop policies and guide priorities related to the development of municipal parks and open space. The Parks and Open Space Study identified two main areas as priorities for action: i) rejuvenation of Neighbourhood parks to ensure equity across the community; and ii) the acquisition of new or designation of City-owned land as parkland. A staff team has been created to address these priorities and create an action plan for the tasks involved. The plan includes requests for annual municipal capital funds and Tollington Parks Endowment Funds and the addition of a staff member to accomplish the tasks over a number of years. Endorsement of the implementation strategies identified in this report is being requested from the Arena, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Submitted by,

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**Attachments:**

Appendix A - Assessment of Parks and Open Space  
Appendix B - Park Development Standards  
Appendix C - Assessment of Parks and Open Space Executive Summary  
Appendix D - Parks Development Standards Executive Summary