

Parks Renaissance Strategy

**Presentation to
General Committee
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Background

- Public Realm strategy approved in 2015
 - Incorporates recommendation to complete Parks Renaissance Strategy
- Feedback / requests from Council over the past 5 years to add amenities to existing parks
- 2016 Capital Budget – Parks Renaissance approved for 2 years of projects (2016/2017)

Rationale for Parks Renaissance Program

- Markham parks are integral to defining the physical and social fabric of our city
- Parks in recently developed areas include modern development and facility provision that offer exciting spaces with a wide range of amenities
- Cultural shifts will place new demands and pressures on existing parks and facilities
- There is a disparity in parkland service levels in some older communities with aging infrastructure of varied conditions
- The provision of new parks in existing, built-up urban areas will be problematic due to a limited or restricted land base
- A more flexible approach to park provision in older communities is necessary

Align Vision to Public Realm

- Builds on the work completed for the Public Realm Strategy: Shared Places, Our Spaces (2015), with a focus on the renewal of parks in older communities
- A place for all that is engaging, sustaining and beautiful
- Goals of the Public Realm Strategy equally apply to the Park Renaissance Strategy and include:
 - Made in Markham Innovation and Design
 - Keep Markham Beautiful
 - Animate Our Neighbourhoods & Districts
 - Harmonize Our Efforts and Share Our Resources
 - Create Gateways and Destinations



Deliverables

- Create guiding principles and a framework to guide the identification and implementation of Parks Renaissance projects
- Develop an engagement strategy that includes Council, staff, stakeholders and the community to identify improvement opportunities
- Align with other related studies including: Shared Places, Our Spaces Markham's Public Realm Strategy (2015); the Integrated Leisure Master Plan (2016); the Parks and Open Space Master Plan (2016); Green print and facilities asset management plans
- Establish processes to assist with prioritizing initiatives, including development of an evaluation criteria, and standards
- Establish a plan celebrate the distinctive characteristics of Markham neighbourhoods and be meaningful to local residents
- Develop an implementation plan and funding strategy to maximize the input on as many projects as possible within a 5-year timeframe

Guiding Principles

Principles to be discussed and reviewed through the consultation process:

- **Inclusivity / Diversity:** Support leisure and recreation opportunities for a diverse range of ages, cultures and abilities
- **Connected:** Facilitate a connected City and community
- **Innovative & Beautiful:** Create diverse, vibrant and memorable spaces
- **Responsive:** Take advantage of the unique characteristics of the site. Projects will be undertaken City-wide with a focus on older parks
- **Sustainable:** Support the protection, enhancement and continued health of natural features on the site and within the natural system
- **Flexible:** Optimize space functionality
- **Fiscally Responsible:** Consider capital, operating life cycle costs and identify project investment synergies

Types of Projects

Examples:

- Shade structures
- Installation of wheelchair accessible picnic tables, quality metal benches & garbage/recycling cans
- Installation of small accessible playground components
- Pathway connections
- Adult exercise equipment
- Outdoor games tables
- Butterfly & pollinator gardens
- Interpretive signage
- Projects generally minor in scope; \$5-\$50k; max limit \$100



Capital Budget Funding

- 2016 Capital Budget - \$1.179M approved
- Multi year program

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria includes:

- **Park Conditions:** Priority to parks developed more than 20 years ago
- **Recreation Needs:** Improvements fulfill identified needs or gaps in the Integrated Leisure Master Plan
- **Population or Socio-demographic Changes:** Population and demographics have changed as a result of an aging neighbourhood or cultural shifts
- **Park Usage:** Community use of the park has changed and new programs require support (e.g. AODA) and response to intensity of use
- **Engaged Community:** Facilitate input from & partnership with Community

Next Steps

1. 2016 Pilot Projects
 - Undertake preliminary assessment to identify at least 15-20 parks for projects in first year
2. Consultation starting with Councillors
3. Initiate diversity of projects
4. Report back to Council – Fall 2016 including:
 - Consultation process
 - Evaluation criteria
 - Examples of pilot projects



Discussion

