

Building Better Parks Asset Management Plan Update

ISSUE

The most recent Parks Asset Management Plan was presented to the October 30, 2017 meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services. Since that time, during the 2019 budget deliberations, an additional \$350,000 was allocated for the Building Better Parks Asset Management Phase-In. This report provides a brief update on the Asset Management Plan and associated recommendations, in order to transfer the \$350,000 additional allocation from reserve into the capital project.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning Development and Community Services recommend to City Council that \$350,000 be allocated from the Parks Infrastructure Reserve to Capital Project 901 – Parks Upgrades, Enhancements and Repairs in order to replace up to three playgrounds that are currently in poor or very poor condition.

BACKGROUND

The Parks Asset Management Plan (see Appendix 1) was completed in October 2017 and identified a funding shortfall of \$5.8 million annually to maintain park assets to the desired condition level. The total replacement cost of identified Parks assets is over \$230 million. Overall, the condition of the majority of park assets, or 64%, are rated fair or above, with 16% being close to the end of their useful life and 20% identified as being past their useful life.

The outcome expenditure level for Parks Assets is a “B” (Getting Better) or “C” (Maintain Assets in Current Condition). The required funding to “B” or “C” expenditure level is averaged at \$10.8 million annually, and it is important to note this is the funding required if all assets were currently in the desired condition. As part of 2019 Business Plan and Budget, an additional \$350,000 was allocated to improve park assets in an effort to begin to close the funding gap identified in the Asset Management Plan.

The Parks Asset Management Plan has not been updated since the end of 2017; however, the information included in the original report remains relevant and is used for decision making purposes. It is anticipated an updated Asset Management Plan will be undertaken within the next few years.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Stakeholders from Parks, Recreation & Community Development, and Facilities Divisions discussed the best approach to prioritize the Building Better Parks Phase-In for 2019.

A Portfolio Management Approach

To prioritize the allocation for 2019, the following data and assessments were considered:

1. Parks Asset Management Plan: Detailed condition levels identified that pathways, parking lots/roadways, certain types of fencing, and older style wooden playgrounds had the overall lowest condition ratings of poor or very poor. Condition assessments have been completed for park amenities including benches, garbage cans, bike racks, and tables. It is important to note that specific condition assessments have not been completed for all park assets and some assessment information has been based on age or other indirect information.
2. Park Condition Framework: The Parks and Facilities Divisions have completed condition assessments on specific amenities and infrastructure within all parks in the city. All parks have been rated on playgrounds, asphalt, furniture, irrigation, drainage, and lighting. In addition, residents per hectare of park space within each neighbourhood have also been taken into consideration.
3. Community Needs and Feedback: Community Consultant input and Local Area Plan recommendations (where applicable) were taken into account.
4. Playground Assessments: Updated and detailed playground assessments were conducted.

Based on the above approach, it is recommended that playgrounds in the following parks be upgraded:

1. Dr. J. Valens Park (Kelsey-Woodlawn);
2. Albert Milne Park (Greystone Heights); and, if 2019 funding allows,
3. D. L. Hamilton (Pleasant Hill).

An average playground replacement costs up to \$150,000, including removal of the existing structure and new installation. All of the above park playgrounds rated poorly on certain portions of the assessment, including potential safety hazards. In addition, Dr. J. Valens and Albert Milne playgrounds are wooden structures previously identified for replacement; if approved, this process can be expedited.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, a Design-Build Process will begin, with design work proceeding through the winter. Existing playgrounds will remain in place over the winter, with construction commencing as early as possible in summer 2020. Using the portfolio management approach explained in this report, future Building Better Parks upgrades will consider all park amenities and be planned to incorporate the full phase-in contribution levels with the priority park areas highlighted in budget documents. Implementation of the plan in subsequent years will be dependent on the level of approved funding the Building Better Parks Asset Management Plan receives during the 2020-2021 budget process.

APPENDICIES

1. Building Better Parks: An Asset Management Plan for Parks

Building Better Parks Asset Management Plan Update

Report Approval

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