

Date: 2023-02-01

Subject: **Budget Amendment: Emancipation Park Servicing Enhancements – Ward 7**

Contact: Ed Fagan, Director, Parks Maintenance & Forestry

Report Number: Community Services-2023-182

Recommendations:

1. That the report from Parks Maintenance & Forestry division, dated February 1, 2023, to the Committee of Council Meeting of February 22, 2023 re: **Budget Amendment: Emancipation Park Servicing Enhancements – Ward 7**, be received; and
2. That Council consider establishing a new capital project in the amount of \$300,000 to complete a feasibility assessment, with funding to be transferred from Reserve #134-Recreation Development Charge; and
3. That interim enhancement solutions for additional grass maintenance practices, tree planting, potential solar lighting options and a generated washroom facility be approved for implementation before summer 2023.

Overview:

- **On August 10, 2022 Council directed staff to report back on means of improving the Emancipation Day celebration event, including field quality and maintenance, toilet facilities, shade development and lighting at Emancipation Park.**
- **To address the need for improved infrastructure within the park, staff conducted a preliminary assessment which, identified an estimated cost of \$4,200,000 to provide electrical, water and underground services.**
- **The City currently leases a portion of the Emancipation Park land from the Province of Ontario and there are plans for a Bus Rapid Transit line, to be developed on the property with timelines to be determined by the Province; which may affect future infrastructure implemented in the park.**

- **While there are factors influencing the long-term plans for the park, staff have also explored feasible options to accommodate field quality maintenance, shading development and a washroom amenity for 2023, through additional grass maintenance practices, tree planting and an interim generated washroom facility. In addition, staff will prioritize a plan for possible solar lighting options within the park for the near future.**
- **The City is currently going through the Request for Information process with Purchasing to explore options for self-sustaining washrooms, as an option to be implemented within existing and future parks citywide.**
- **This staff report seeks Council's consideration on proceeding with a feasibility assessment in further determining long-term infrastructure within the park and the approval of additional grass maintenance practices, tree planting and a generated washroom facility as interim solutions.**

Background:

Emancipation Park was constructed over 15 years ago with 48.31 acres leased from the Province for a period of fifty (50) years commencing October 1, 2000 and expiring September 30, 2050. The City of Brampton owns 62 acres of the land, which is bordered by Highway 407 to the north, City of Mississauga to the south and landlocked to the east.

The Ministry of Transportation has a land option for a sizable portion of the south area of the park that is planned to be utilized for a Bus Rapid Transit line. The Environmental Assessment planning phase has been completed and is under review by the Province to determine future timelines. Depending on the outcome, this may limit future access for services (water and electrical) within the park. Section (17.03) of the Land Lease with the Province, outlines the cancellation processes, which states in the event that the Lands are required for the purpose of a transit way, associated transit station or parking, the Landlord shall have the right to terminate the lease at any time upon providing the City with (1) year prior written notice.

The park holds sentimental recognition as in 2020, it was approved by Council to be renamed from Dixie 407 to Emancipation Park, in recognizing the emancipation of the Afro-Caribbean community. Emancipation Park is also utilized by community members as a celebratory event space and a recreational sports park.

On August 10, 2022 staff presented the report Emancipation Park – Ward 7 to Council in response to Referred Matters List item (61/2021). The report outlined the status of an Emancipation Memorial, servicing, and the installation of flag poles within the park. Council directed staff to report back on means of improving the Emancipation Day celebration event, including quality and maintenance, toilet facilities, shading

development, and lighting options.

Current Situation:

The park is home to various sports fields which includes: (6) mini soccer fields, (7) senior soccer fields and (3) cricket overlays. It is also an emerging event space hosting community events such as Emancipation Day.

Currently the grass and fields are maintained weekly with regular fertilizing, aeration, seeding, lining, top-dressing and daily litter picking throughout the season. There are (6) portlets available within the park during the months of April to October, with a weekly maintenance schedule being followed. In regards to shading, the park has (1) permanent shade shelter that is located on the east-side of the park. There is no current lighting within the park due to the lack of electrical services on the site.

Servicing

Currently there is no infrastructure (water and electrical) throughout the park. Staff conducted a preliminary assessment in discussions with the Region of Peel and the Ministry of Transportation, to determine the estimated cost of having possible infrastructure within the park. Through this exercise, a high-level cost estimate of \$3,500,000 was projected to have the infrastructure brought to the park's property line from Drew Road, located in Mississauga. This cost does not include the infrastructure brought into Emancipation Park. An additional estimated amount of \$700,000 would be required to extend the access into the park.

In regards to lighting, it has been noted there are no concerns at this stage by the 407 Express Toll Route to incorporate overhead lights within the park. Should this be pursued, the City would have to submit detailed lighting designs for review and approval.

Should there be any installation improvements on the land, the City would have to attain the Landlord's written consent and submit details of the proposed improvements including plans and specifications prepared by qualified architects or engineers.

A feasibility assessment will identify access to infrastructure, environmental site requirements, engagement of all stakeholders to validate costs, site details and timelines. In addition, it will provide staff with a detailed report on any other required infrastructure including water, underground and electrical services. This will determine if Emancipation Park is a conducive location to implement self-sustainable washrooms or future amenities. An estimated amount of \$300,000 would be required to conduct a feasibility assessment.

Next Steps 2023

For the 2023 season, the Parks Division will include additional grass and field maintenance practices such as supplementary aerating and top dressing of sports fields to ensure field quality standards are continuously met. The Parks Maintenance and Forestry division is scheduling to have an additional shade shelter installed onsite, as this has been included in the 2023 Capital Budget submission at an estimated amount of \$150,000 for (1) 20ft x 40ft shade shelter.

Emancipation Park will be incorporated in the spring 2023 tree planting plan to increase the natural shade canopy within the park, aligning with Brampton's Urban Forest Management Plan. In regards to a washroom amenity, staff have sourced an interim self-contained (32ft x 10ft) washroom facility that is compact with water and sewer features and will be operated by a diesel generator for the 2023 season. This is a rental unit and the estimated cost will be \$50,000 for the season with funding from the Parks Maintenance and Forestry operation budget. Staff are collaborating with internal partners to prioritize a plan for possible solar lighting options within the park for the near future.

Pending Council's consideration, staff will work with community stakeholders to develop an art installation at Emancipation Park in line with the City of Brampton Public Art strategy.

With the support of Purchasing, staff are awaiting the closing of a Request for Information process on the usage of self-sustaining washrooms, as a possible innovative approach within current and future parks.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Subject to approval, the Parks Maintenance & Forestry division's proposed 2023 operating budget will have sufficient funding available to provide the required maintenance, shading development and interim washroom amenity for the 2023 season.

In order to provide the required infrastructure, a preliminary high-level estimated amount of \$4.2M will be essential to service Emancipation Park.

Should Council wish to proceed, a new capital project will need to be established in the amount of \$300,000 to complete a feasibility assessment, with funding to be transferred from Reserve #134-Recreation Development Charge.

Once the feasibility assessment is completed, staff will return to Council with a report outlining the timelines, site details and cost required to proceed with providing infrastructure required to service Emancipation Park.

Legal Implications:

The City will be required to comply with certain obligations contained in its lease with the Landlord (Province of Ontario) prior to commencing and during the performance of work on the leased lands. This includes: not installing any improvements on the lands without the Landlord's prior written consent, the submission to the Landlord of details of proposed improvements to the land, including plans and specifications prepared by qualified architects or engineers, and that the work or improvements are completed in compliance with any reasonable requirements of the Landlord and any other governmental authority. If the City does not comply with these obligations, the Landlord may require that the improvements be removed at the City's expense and the lands restored. At the end of the lease term, the Landlord will take back possession of the leased lands, including full ownership of the improvements the City has made.

Term of Council Priorities:

This report supports the following Term of Council Priorities:

- Brampton is a Mosaic City – Creating community spaces to support cultural events and developing a holistic framework to embed diversity across the city.
- Brampton is a Healthy and Safe City – Continue to design, build and maintain community spaces that will encourage active and healthy lifestyles while improving the mental health of all ages and abilities.

Conclusion:

With Council's consideration, staff will proceed with a feasibility assessment at Emancipation Park. This will identify the cost, site details and timelines needed to implement infrastructure within the park. As an interim solution, staff will prioritize a plan: for possible solar lighting options, additional grass maintenance practices, installation of a generated washroom facility, and integrate tree planting and an additional shade shelter.

Reviewed by:

Ed Fagan
Director, Parks Maintenance & Forestry,
Community Services

Approved by:

Chief Bill Boyes
Interim Commissioner,
Community Services

Approved by:

Marlon Kallideen
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Appendix A: Emancipation Park Leased vs. Owned Lands