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Town of Aurora
Council Report
No. OPS24-006

Subject: Thelma Fielding Park Development – Funding Increase

Prepared by: Sara Tienkamp, Director of Operations

Department: Operational Services

Date: April 23, 2024

Recommendation

1. That Report No. OPS24-006 be received; and
2. That Capital Project No. GN0150 – Thelma Fielding Park conditional budget authority of \$4,493,900 be approved; and that this project's budget authority be increased by a further \$2,616,100, resulting in a total revised budget authority for this project of \$7,310,000; and
3. That this project's total revised budget authority of \$7,310,000 be funded by \$2,000,000 in Parks & Recreation development charges and \$2,310,000 in Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland proceeds; with the remainder funded through cost recoveries from St. Anne's School and Shining Hill Estates Collection Inc.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the report is to provide Council with final park design and budget requirements for the construction of a neighbourhood park within the Shining Hill Development on St. John's Sideroad:

- Partnerships play an important role in fostering a strong sense of community and have proven successful for the Town.
- Town working committees offer design input included in the final detailed park design and layout.

- Tender results for park construction very competitive between contractors; however, approximately \$2,100,000 over the preliminary estimated design cost share agreement of \$5,190,000 and can be attributed to detailed design works/inflationary pressures.
- Premium artificial turf to be installed with St. Anne's School contributing additional funding to support the upgrade.

Background

Partnerships play an important role in fostering a strong sense of community and have proven successful for the Town.

Shining Hill Estates Collection Inc. (Shining Hill) holds the lands in the northwest corner of St. John's Sideroad and Yonge Street, formerly known as the Dunin Estate, and are currently in the process of developing the lands. Council approved Shining Hill's applications, including a draft plan of subdivision on March 28, 2023 (Report PDS23-019). Parkland has been allocated as per the Town's Parkland Dedication By-law.

In May 2023, staff presented Council with Report No. OPS23-006 Shining Hill Neighborhood Park Design. This report included a potential partnership opportunity between St. Anne's School (SAS), Shining Hill and the Town to construct a neighbourhood park inclusive of an artificial turf, splashpad, playground and pickleball courts.

Council approved the Park Concept Plan and proposed funding model allowing staff to finalize a partnership agreement to construct the park. In addition, it was Council's expectation that a follow-up report be presented for its review and approval of the park's final design and budget, upon completion of the detailed design work and total estimated construction costs.

Analysis

Town working committees offer design input included in the final detailed park design and layout.

The final design for the park was refined; however, it has not changed greatly from the original concept plan and still includes all the originally proposed amenities:

- Asphalt paved parking lot, +/-20 cars with accessible space(s)
- Multi-use, lit artificial turf field

- Shelter area for shade
- Playground
- Integrated accessible pedestrian walkway system with multiple access points
- Washroom building
- Splash pad
- Lit Pickleball courts (2)
- Multi-use court, (basketball/ball hockey)

Staff presented the park design on June 7, 2023, to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Committee inquired about the potential for the inclusion of a fully accessible swing and rubberized surfacing. Staff informed the group that an accessible swing requires a significant footprint and would be more appropriate in a community park where playground footprints are larger. The rubberized surface has been included in the project and will assist in the overall accessibility to other accessible components in the playground.

The design was also presented at the June 15, 2023, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee in which there were comments on the noise of pickleball and landscape planting/screening opportunities. Pickleball courts were moved to the north end of the park where they are further away from residential homes. The plan also considers significant plantings and screening buffers.

Staff have also included lighting in the plans for the basketball/ball hockey court as providing lights for these types of courts was recommended through the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) review. Lighting improves safety and extends recreational play during the months with shorter daylight hours.

Tender results for park construction very competitive between contractors; however, approximately \$2,100,000 over the preliminary estimated design cost share agreement of \$5,190,000 and can be attributed to detailed design works/inflationary pressures.

The Shining Hill Group received a total of four bids for the park construction and submissions were all highly competitive compared to one another. The following is an overview of the costs for the preliminary estimate cost share and tender construction/administration costs based on detailed design for the park, including details on the areas of increase based on amenities:

- Cost Share Agreement/Preliminary Design (including contingency) - \$5,190,000
- Tendered Construction/Contract Admin. Cost (including contingency) - \$7,310,000

The cost increase to the budget is primarily attributed to the washroom facility. Original estimate was approximately \$500,000, tender results for the building were \$960,000, a difference of \$460,000. Building costs for structures have increased significantly and have been confirmed with our neighbouring municipalities for similar structures they have currently contracted for construction.

Also not included in the original cost estimate was a rubberized surface for the playground/splash pad. This was recommended through the Accessibility Advisory Committee and added by staff as it is the ideal safety surface, requires minimal maintenance over the lifecycle of the playground and allows for easy transition between the playground and splash pad areas. Lighting surrounding the multi-use court was also added to the design as it was recommended through the PRMP.

The artificial turf is also contributing to the increase of approximately \$300,000 as a premium turf was specified to accommodate sporting requirements for rugby (SAS to fund the upgrade). In addition, detail design works determined grade challenges that require ramps/retaining walls for accessible access. Fencing has also been significantly increased in height surrounding the field to accommodate the land configuration/layout in relationship to roads and proposed residential units.

As the total cost for the park has risen, it has resulted in the contingency being a driver for the increased funding requirement. The preliminary design contingency was 10 per cent; however, as a safeguard it has been increased to 15 per cent.

It is important to note that this new park includes numerous amenities indicative of a Community Park setting rather than a Neighbourhood Park and, as such, it is expected the budget to construct would be greater than a typical neighbourhood park.

Approximately 45% of the cost of the project is for the Community Park, with the other 55% representing the costs of the artificial turf field that is jointly funded by the partnership.

Premium artificial turf to be installed with St. Anne's School contributing additional funding to support the upgrade.

The quality of artificial sports turf varies greatly in the industry and different sports have differing needs and requirements for optimal play.

During the design process, several products were investigated, including a premium turf specifically designed to meet Rugby Regulation 22 which governs rugby standards for turf quality and safe play. The difference between manufacturers of a regular standard turf and premium turf products relate to the quality and length of turf fibres,

components utilized to infill the turf and primarily the underlay (shock pad). Specifically, the underlay of a premium turf can extend the lifecycle of the turf up to ten years (standard turf has a life expectancy of eight to twelve years) and remains viable for two lifecycle replacements of the turf, ultimately lasting thirty plus years potentially. Economically, it makes good business sense to invest in a premium underlay and from a player/sporting body perspective it increases safety and meets governing regulations allowing for high level competition/tournaments.

As a result, specifications for the premium turf were included in the tender documents. SAS wants to have the premium turf installed in the park as it best serves the needs of the school and have committed to increasing their contribution to the funding model to accommodate the installation/construction costs.

It is important to note that the Aurora Barbarians are also interested in the premium product at Sheppard's Bush as they require this turf to meet Rugby Regulation 22 to support their competitive play programs. Staff are working with the design consultant on options and the Barbarians are willing to contribute more funding to support the upgrade.

Staff support the upgrades as the Town will benefit from the premium turf as it will allow for high level competition/tournament play, supporting Sport Tourism objectives as there will be three turfs available for high level rugby games/tournaments in Aurora at Thelma Fielding Park, Sheppard's Bush and current rugby fields located at St. Andrew's College. The field will also be lined to support other sports such as soccer, field hockey and flag football, which is rapidly growing among women and now an Olympic sport. In addition, the lifecycle expectancy of the turf will be greatly extended realizing cost savings for capital replacement over the long term.

Advisory Committee Review

The park design was presented to both the Accessibility Advisory Committee on June 7, 2023, and Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee on June 15, 2023. Comments associated with both committees are discussed in the preceding Analysis section of the report.

Legal Considerations

Once staff have negotiated terms with SAS and Shining Hill, an agreement will be entered into which will include provisions to clarify the roles of the parties, the funding strategy and the necessary insurance and indemnification provisions.

Since the park will also be constructed on lands owned by the Town of Newmarket, and since some amenities will be located on SAS lands, the Town will also be required to enter into some type of use arrangement with both parties. Staff have delegated authority for any agreements or documents required to implement this arrangement.

Financial Implications

To date, Council has approved a total of \$200,000 in budget authority for this project in support of the proposed park’s design work. A further \$4,493,900 in additional capital budget authority was conditionally approved by Council in support of this project as part of the 2022 capital budget based upon this project’s preliminary cost estimate.

The total estimated cost based upon this proposed park’s final design and construction cost estimate is \$7,310,000, representing a total cost increase of \$2,616,100 compared to the previous preliminary estimate.

The Town is in the process of finalizing a tri-party cost sharing agreement for this park with the developer and SAS. The Town’s share of this project’s cost is anticipated to be \$4,310,000 as presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Shining Hill Park Cost Sharing Breakdown

Contributor	Cost Share Based on Preliminary Design	Cost Share Based on Final Park Design/Tender
Shining Hill Developments	750,000	750,000
St. Annes School	1,528,000	2,250,000
Town of Aurora	2,912,000	4,310,000
Total	5,190,000	7,310,000

Staff recommended that Council lift its condition on the \$4,493,900 in additional capital budget authority for this project, increasing this project's total budget authority to \$4,693,900. It is also recommended that Council approve a further increase to this project's total budget authority of \$2,616,100 bringing its total authority to \$7,310,000.

It is recommended that the Town's share of the total proposed budget authority for this project be funded by \$2,000,000 in Parks & Recreation development charges and \$2,310,000 in Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland proceeds; and that the remaining unfunded portion be funded through contributions from SAS and Shining Hill as detailed in Table 1.

Table 2 presents a summary of staff's final recommended funding strategy for the Town's share of this project's total proposed budget.

Table 2
Proposed Shining Hill Park Funding Strategy

Funding Source	Approved	Proposed Change	Proposed Total
Parks & Recreation DC	-	2,000,000	2,000,000
Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland	200,000	2,110,000	2,310,000
Total	200,000	4,110,000	4,310,000

Communications Considerations

The Town will inform the public of the information contained in this report by posting it to the Town's website. Additionally, the Corporate Communications division will provide regular public updates about the progress of construction, as well as completion of the project, through regular communications channels.

Climate Change Considerations

The recommendations from this report do not immediately impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation. However, during detailed design, green infrastructure for storm water, soft landscape, building design and green procurement were considered and implemented where feasible. They all play an important roll

mitigating the impacts of a changing climate, from air quality, stormwater management to counteracting the effects of the heat island.

Link to Strategic Plan

Park facilities support the Strategic Plan Goal of Supporting an Exceptional Quality of Life for All, by encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle.

Develop a long-term needs assessment for recreation programs, services, and operations to match the evolving needs of the growing and changing population.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council provide staff direction.

Conclusions

Staff recommend that this project move forward as per the original approved scope as designed, for the construction of Thelma Fielding Park, in partnership with SAS and Shining Hill Developments. This park will be an important amenity for the neighbourhood, school and community as a whole, illustrating the importance of how partnerships can support recreational initiatives.

Consequently, it is recommended that the total capital budget authority for Capital Project No. GN0150 - Shining Hill Park be increased to \$7,310,000 and that this spending authority be funded from the Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Reserve and from the Parks and Recreation Development Charges Reserve, with the remainder funded through cost recoveries from SAS and Shining Hill Estates Collection Inc.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Final Park Design

Previous Reports

OPS23-006 Shining Hill Neighborhood Park Design, May 16, 2023

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on April 18, 2024

Approvals

Approved by Sara Tienkamp, Director, Operational Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer