

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – APRIL 28, 2008

STRATEGY FOR THE RETROFIT / REDESIGN OF OLDER PUBLIC PARKS

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella recommends that the Environment Committee approve and recommend to Council the adoption of the terms of reference (either as is, or as the Committee amends them) for a committee composed of staff of the Parks & Forestry and Parks Development Departments, to prepare, under the direction of the Commissioner of Community Services, a preliminary strategy for the retrofit and redesign of older municipal parks (defined as those built twenty-five years ago or more), such strategy to parallel that being developed by other departments (Engineering, Public Works, Finance) to address issues relating to the on-going maintenance and renewal of all municipal infrastructure; and that the terms of reference of the staff committee shall include but not be limited to providing answers to the following questions:

- how best can we assess the current physical condition of older parks?
- how best can we assess the present types and levels of older park usage?
- how best can we engage the public in the redesign of older parks?
- how best can we anticipate future levels of older park usage?
- how best can we identify current practices in terms of park retrofit/redesign?
- how best can we finance park retrofit/redesign?
- how best can we *manage* parks?
- how best can we re-conceptualize parks in light of the challenge posed by such as community centres, while ignoring parks for the most part in terms of programming designed to maximise their use in ways we can barely conceive.

Economic Impact

Nil

Purpose

To commence a discussion, in house, of issues relating to the retrofitting of our oldest parks, their potential redesign, and possible reconceptualization, in light of issues raised by presenters at the Vaughan Public Speaker series on park management best practices.

Communication Plan

As the recommendation is for the approval of what is essentially an “in-house” discussion, a communication plan is not necessary.

Background – Analysis and Options

The intent of the recommendation is to launch a discussion based on two premises: (1) parks are a type of municipal infrastructure, and like all infrastructure they age, and (2) as parks reach the stage when some measure of retrofitting is needed, an opportunity exists to redesign them to better reflect evolving ideas about parks as a constructed feature of the natural environment and to respond to changing recreational preferences.

Regional Implications

Nil

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 20/20

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

It is time to consider not only the retrofit of older parks, but their redesign and reconceptualization as public spaces that need to be managed in order that they provide the maximum benefit to our communities.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

Councillor Tony Carella

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Carella
Councillor – Ward 2