

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services
Meeting Date: April 17, 2024
Report Code: CS-24-032
Subject: Harrison Park Master Plan – Draft Recommendations

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-24-032 respecting Harrison Park Master Plan – Draft Recommendations, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to bring forward a report on the draft final plan and incorporate the feedback from Committee regarding the draft recommendations.

Highlights:

- Updating the Harrison Park Master Plan is an important tool to ensure that parks' capital spending and operations are optimized and meeting the needs of the public and reflect current best practices;
- In 2023, the Committee approved an approach to updating the Harrison Park Master Plan utilizing in-house staff with some consulting support relating to the bird/waterfowl area;
- In December 2023 Committee received a report and summary of the public feedback that had been received.
- The public feedback, together with the background and best practices, expert advice respecting the waterfowl and avian area and operating and capital budget considerations, have been used to inform the draft actions of the master plan.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Service Excellence. KR1 – Further develop a culture of learning, development, well-being and embrace new approaches to service provision.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by considering climate adaptation in the development of the City's strategies, plans and policies.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Harrison Park Master Plan](#)

[Recreation Parks and Facilities Master Plan](#)

[Owen Sound Strategic Plan 2021-2023](#)

[City of Owen Sound Official Plan](#)

[CS-23-030 Harrison Park Master Plan](#) – Background and Project Approach

[OurCity](#)

[CS-23-130](#) Harrison Park Master Plan – Summary of Public Feedback

Background:

In March of 2023, Committee received report [CS-23-030](#) together with a visual presentation. The report provided a significant amount of background information respecting Harrison Park, including:

Overview of Harrison Park

- Park location and history;
- Recreation, Parks, and Facilities Master Plan (2018);
- Park Sections, Existing Features and Park Amenities;
- Interpretive Plaques; and,
- Tree inventory.

Information on the Use of the Park

- Use of the park, including special events;

- Rental data from the Pavilion, Community Hall and Bandshell and Events;
- Existing Operating Agreements and 3rd Party Leases;
- Campground; and,
- Unstructured use.

Report card on the 2002 Master Plan and other completed initiatives

The report also provided an outline, approach and timeline relating to the update of the 2002 Harrison Park Master Plan.

The project has been branded and all communication includes the brand for ease of recognition.



The approach to the Master Plan includes 5 phases:

1. Define Purpose and Objective,
2. Identify Issues and Opportunities,
3. Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Workshops,
4. Action Planning and Recommendation Development, and;
5. Master Plan Framework and Implementation Plan.



The December 2023 report provided a summary of the public feedback based on the survey feedback. A summary of the public feedback is included in Attachment 1.

We are now at the stage of developing the actions for the Master Plan.

Analysis:

The public feedback, together with the background and best practices, expert advice respecting the waterfowl and avian area, and operating and capital considerations, have been used by a multidisciplinary staff team to inform the draft master plan and actions (Attachment 2).

The draft Vision for the Harrison Park Master Plan is:

Inspired by a rich cultural heritage and diverse natural environment, we envision a vibrant space that fosters community connections and environmental stewardship and celebrates and maintains the rich cultural and natural history. Committed to sustainable practices, we strive to cultivate a place of beauty, learning, community, and recreation for all, ensuring a legacy of inspiration, memories, and wonder for generations to come.

The Master Plan addresses 5 overall considerations relating to the development of the actions including:

- a. Conflicting and Competing Use/Overuse
- b. Natural amenities and slopes;
- c. Accessibility and Inclusion;
- d. Cultural Heritage Landscape; and
- e. Asset Renewal and rationalization.

Because of the size and complexity of the Park, the Master Plan divides the 150-acre park into 9 Functional areas with certain global recommendations that apply across the entirety of the Park:

1. West Park Entry;
2. West Woodland and Escarpment Lands;
3. Island and Pleasure Grounds;
4. Inn, Good Cheer Rink and Bandshell area
5. Community Hall, Tennis/Pickleball Court, Upper Meadow and Pool Area;
6. Campground Area;
7. Bird area and Parks Operations Yard;
8. The Mile Drive; and,
9. Toboggan Hill, Commemorative Forest Grove, Fitness Trail and Northeast Woodland;

Together, the sum of the parts comprises Harrison Park and reflects a diverse and complex set of interrelated parts.

The Master Plan recommendations are organized to address Operational & Maintenance Issues as well as Capital program needs.

Given the public feedback, capital and operating considerations, public feedback and the four considerations noted above, the focus of the actions prioritize revitalizing existing assets and features as opposed to creating new assets.

For each functional area, there is a high-level description of each of the area. Each of the areas is named using an abbreviated short form, followed by OM for operating and C for Capital Recommendations.











As an example:

West Park Entry (WPE) Operational/Maintenance (OM) Recommendations

WPE-OM-001; or

WPE-C-001.

The various recommendations have been classified under the following ten general themes. For many of the actions, more than one theme may apply.

| Theme | Icon |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accessibility |  |
| Environmental Stewardship |  |
| Parks Management Best Practice |  |
| Operational Efficiency |  |
| Safety |  |
| Asset Management |  |
| Diversity, Equity and Inclusion |  |
| Cultural Heritage |  |
| Communication |  |
| Implement a previously approved action |  |

The draft master plan and actions are attached.

At the Committee meeting on April 17, 2024, each member will be asked to place green dots on recommendations they support and red dots on any recommendations they do not feel are warranted.

Committee will also be asked to provide input on projects they consider a priority as follows: Short-term, (1-5 years), medium-term, (6-10 years) or longer-term, (11-15 years).

There will be an accompanying presentation that provides highlights and some photos of the various recommendations for background and context.

Following the input from the Committee, the recommendations will be finalized and the final plan will be submitted for approval by Committee with a recommendation to Council.

Financial Implications:

The focus of this master plan is not on the generation of new assets. This master plan focuses on asset investment and renewal.

The approval of the Master Plan does not pre-approve the operating or capital budget. These projects will be factored into the capital program as required, based on timing and be considered in the context of the City's overall budgets.

Communication Strategy:

Draft plan and report will be added to the [OurCity](#) Page.

Anyone who signed up for notices will receive an update.

This report and draft published through committee agenda and minutes to council.

Consultation:

A plan for public consultation and communication was established at the outset of the project. There has been significant consultation. In part, the recommendations are based on the consultation.

The draft plan will be added to the [OurCity](#) page.

Attachments:

1. Summary of public input
2. Draft Harrison Park Master Plan

Recommended by:

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services, at pcoulter@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 Ext. 1252.