



TOWN OF WHITBY REPORT

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

REPORT TO: Operations Committee	REPORT NO: CMS 1-08
DATE OF MEETING: 14 January 2008	FILE NO(S):
PREPARED BY: Community and Marketing Services	LOCATION:
REPORT TITLE/SUBJECT: Update on the Cullen Central Park Master Plan Study	

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the update on the Cullen Central Park Master Plan Study be received as information.

2.0 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Cullen Central Park Master Plan study was awarded to the following group of consultants: Envision – The Hough Group, dmA Planning and Management Services and urbanMetrics Inc. The study has four phases. Phase 1 of the study, comprised of understanding the property's background, developing an inventory and analysis and developing general visions and principles is on time and nearing completion.

A Public Meeting to present the findings and the draft visions and principles will be held on Wednesday, January 23, 2008 in the Council Chambers.

3.0 **ORIGIN:**

Cullen Central Park has been owned as a Town asset since April 2006. Since that time, the Town has put the property to use by renting out the facilities for functions, and using the property to run summer camps for young children. These uses may or may not be considered temporary in nature depending upon future decisions regarding a Master Plan for the property.

4.0 BACKGROUND:

The four phases of the Cullen Central Park Master Plan study include:

- Phase 1- Background, Inventory and Analysis, General Vision and Principles
- Phase 2- Identification of Potential Uses
- Phase 3- Assessment of Potential Uses
- Phase 4- Final Recommendations

The consultants are conducting Phase 1 of the study and have completed the following tasks:

- Facilitated the first Steering Committee meeting and participated in a site tour;
- Conducted an inventory and analysis of local, regional and historical context, landscapes/character areas, environmental attributes, cultural heritage, buildings/facilities, servicing and circulation, current and past uses, and market research.
- Conducted 2 focus groups (see attachments for minutes of meetings)
- Conducted some key informant interviews; a few remain to be completed.

5.0 DISCUSSION/OPTIONS:

To date, the consultants have provided the Town with focus group minutes. Two focus groups were conducted, including one for Environment, Heritage and Trails groups and one for Business and Community Groups.

The key questions discussed include:

1. How are you/your organization currently involved in Cullen Central Park, or with other Town initiatives (if at all)?
2. What are the key opportunities for the park from your group/personal perspective?
3. Are there any opportunities for future collaboration/partnerships with your organization?

Minutes of the discussion are provided as an attachment. However, a summary is provided below:

Environment, Heritage and Trails Groups

- Heritage Whitby/LACAC would like to consider using Lynde House as a museum again.
- Communities in Bloom would like to see the property remain as park space

- Group 74 would like to see improvements to the accessibility of the buildings
- Brooklin Horticultural Society would like to see the property remain as park space
- Scouts would be interested in using the facility for hiking and environmental/heritage projects. They would also like to use the indoor activity space with access to the outdoors about once a month
- Community Gardens would like to use the North Field area for a community garden
- Friends of Cullen Central Park support environmental, ecological and educational uses. They want to ensure wildlife corridors and the property's sensitive ecology is maintained
- The Environment, Heritage and Trails groups support corporate sponsorship to assist with costs
- Communities in Bloom, Brooklin Horticultural Society, Scouts, Community Gardens, Friends of Cullen Central Park, Durham College and Durham District School Board are interested in developing the property for environmental, horticultural and gardening education
- Connections to Heber Down CA are important
- Other ideas include seniors' programming, youth programming, chef's school or restaurant focused on local food, and renting out the kitchen for home-based businesses

Business and Community Groups

- Downtown Whitby want to ensure that future uses are significant enough to replace the tourism lost when Cullen Garden closed. They would also like to see Arts and Culture programming on the property
- A possible model may involve arts/culture with environmental/horticultural initiatives
- Business and Community Groups support public/private sector initiatives to offset operational costs and capital investment. They would also like the Town to consider business incentives to encourage investment in the site.
- Any new facilities should have LEED certification
- The site should promote non-automobile modes of transportation
- Other ideas include: an accessible playground, an outdoor rink, groomed cross-country ski trails, performing arts space, a conference/banquet centre, and a branch library

The Phase 1 draft background report will be circulated in late January, after input from the public meeting has been incorporated. The consultants will then proceed with Phase 2, which will involve identifying potential uses and users.

In addition to the focus groups and key informant interviews, interest has been expressed by the Durham Chapter of Landscape Ontario (LO). Staff will be meeting with the Building Committee of the Board of Directors of Landscape Ontario the second week of January 2008 to explore potential linkages and opportunities for both LO and the Municipality.

6.0 COMMUNICATION ISSUES/PLAN:

A public meeting will be held at 6pm on Wednesday, January 23 at the Town of Whitby Council Chambers. This meeting will provide the public and stakeholders the opportunity to review the consultant's findings of the inventory and analysis, to provide their opinion on draft visions and principles for the property, and to discuss current uses, public interests and preferences.

7.0 CONSIDERATIONS:

A. PUBLIC

The master plan process will provide many opportunities for the public to participate. For the upcoming public meeting, invitations will be sent out to interested stakeholders/participants during the first week of January. An ad will be posted on the municipal website and placed in the local paper on the Wednesday and Sunday prior to the public meeting.

B. FINANCIAL

The total budget for the study is \$62,895.10, inclusive of GST. The study is nearing the end of Phase 1 and the consultants have billed the Town \$8,222.01 for their work.

C. IMPACT ON & INPUT FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS/SOURCES

N/A

D. CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This Master Plan study supports objectives 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the Whitby Community Strategic Plan.

This study also supports a number of strategic directions of the Culture, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan:

Facilities and Strategic Direction 1
Parks and Open Space Strategic Directions 1 and 4
Organization Strategic Direction 2

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This report is an update on the Cullen Central Park Master Plan study. The consultants are completing Phase 1 of the study, involving an inventory and analysis of the property's background and assets, and key informant interviews and focus groups. From this information, guiding visions and principles will be developed. The findings and analysis will be presented at a public meeting on January 23, 2008. A draft Phase 1 background report will be circulated after input from the public meeting has been incorporated.

9.0 ATTACHMENTS

1. Business and Community Focus Group minutes
2. Environment, Heritage and Trails Focus Group minutes

For further information contact:

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