



TOWN OF WHITBY REPORT

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

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| REPORT TO: Operations Committee | REPORT NO: CMS 17-08 |
| DATE OF MEETING: 5 May 2008 | FILE NO(S): |
| PREPARED BY: Community and Marketing Services | LOCATION: Cullen Central Park |
| REPORT TITLE/SUBJECT: Cullen Central Park Master Plan Phase 2/3 | |

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Council direct the valleyland portion of the Cullen Central Park facility, of approximately 65.5 acres, be set aside by the Town of Whitby as public open space to be utilized only for passive and active recreation, conservation and flood/erosion control uses, including the future development of trails and trail connections to the Heber Down Conservation Area;
2. That Council direct Staff and the Consultants to focus on proposed uses for the tablelands (approximately 20 acres) and valleylands of the Cullen Central Park facility for Phase 2/3 of the Master Plan process in accordance with the recommendations in the report;
3. That Council endorse and provide Staff with any additional general development scenarios and proposed uses for the tableland portion of the Cullen Central Park facility for evaluation;
4. That Council endorse the evaluation criteria identified in the Report as the basis of evaluating possible uses for the tableland portion of the Cullen Central Park Facility;
5. That the general development scenarios, proposed uses and evaluation criteria be presented to the public at a public workshop; and
6. That Staff report back to Council on the input received at the public workshop.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Cullen Central Park Master Plan study, Phase 2 and 3 involves identifying potential uses and assessing them. Three potential scenarios, along with potential uses and evaluation criteria are provided in this report. These will be presented at a public workshop on May 22, 2008.

3.0 ORIGIN:

This report originates in the Community and Marketing Services Department and is provided as a follow up to CMS Report # 8-08 Cullen Central Park Master Plan, Phase 1 Summary report.

4.0 BACKGROUND:

Community and Marketing Services Department Staff, in conjunction with consultants Envision -The Hough Group, urbanMetrics and dmA Planning and Management are undertaking a Master Plan Study for the Cullen Central Park property. The study commenced in 2007.

Phase 1 of the study is complete. Phase 1 involved the review of all available background information, site visits and initial public input. The product of Phase 1 was a Background Report, the most important elements which were:

- Initial public input and suggestion on proposed uses;
- Emerging opportunities and interests;
- Strategic principles; and
- Some key considerations for both the tableland and valleyland areas.

Phase 2 and 3 of the Study process is primarily concerned with developing scenarios for the property by establishing potential uses and evaluating those uses.

5.0 DISCUSSION/OPTIONS:

Key Conclusions Respecting the Valleylands

Valleylands associated with the major stream valleys in the Town of Whitby are typically set aside as public open space. While much of the valleylands are privately owned, they come into public ownership by way of dedication through the development process, outright acquisition by the Town and gifting. These open space lands are utilized for passive or active open recreation uses, conservation and flood/erosion management and control.

The Cullen valleylands are approximately 65.5 acres in area. They are situated on the main east branch of the Lynde Creek system between open space lands owned by the Town to the south and the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority to the north. As such they form a critical piece of the continuous open space system between Whitby and Brooklin. Given their nature and location they should be set aside for recreation, conservation and flood control purposes. Development is not permitted on these lands with the exception of works related to the permitted uses such as trails, parking lots, flood and erosion control works.

It is noted that the 65.5 acres comprise a range of land forms. Some areas such as the east field have been dramatically altered by human activity. Other areas retain much of their forest cover but also include alterations such as trails and former building sites. A large area has been re-naturalized with the planting of the Ontario Wildflower Garden. Finally certain areas in the north of the property have had minimal human disruptions and retain the naturally occurring vegetation communities.

It is recommended that the valleyland areas be set aside solely for passive and active recreation uses, conservation and flood/erosion management. Future use of the valleyland should have regard to the following key considerations:

1. Enhance the ecological and recreational connections to Heber Down CA and beyond
2. Manage for ecological sustainability of the Lynde Creek watershed
3. Manage for protection and enhancement of valued plant and animal habitat
4. Integrate opportunities for community/visitor use and enjoyment that are compatible with ecological objectives.

Key Products to be developed in Phase 2 and 3

The Steering Committee and consultants developed 3 general scenarios for use of the tableland portion of the property. Based upon the traits of each scenario, specific uses were suggested. A summary of these proposed uses is provided in Attachment #1. In addition, a comprehensive evaluation criteria and weighting was developed. The evaluation criteria were subsequently combined into a smaller list of 6 criteria, each having a number of attributes. These will be discussed in a later section of the report.

The three general development scenarios for use are:

1. Town owned and operated uses;
2. Educational or Institutional uses; and
3. Private Sector owned and operated uses.

The main difference between the scenarios is the primary user and its related uses.

The Town owned and an operated use scenario involves the Town as the prime operator of programs and events. Some examples of potential uses under this scenario include a branch library, branch municipal offices, and education displays/demonstrations, while further developing portions of the tableland for recreational purposes. This scenario could also include Town-managed leases to private or non-profit operators. Examples include a day care centre and restaurant/cafeteria. This use does not exclude severing a portion of the site to recover some of the cost of buying the property.

The Educational or Institutional use scenario involves one or several major organizations using the site for office and/or instructional programs. This could be facilitated through partnerships with the Town or by selling a portion of the land to an organization. Some examples of potential uses under this scenario include an interpretive centre, classrooms and studios, private offices, and a cafeteria. This scenario could also accommodate ancillary uses such as a day care centre, or a conference/banquet facility. The proposal for Landscape Ontario to relocate their headquarters to the property would be categorized under this scenario.

The Private Sector use scenario involves allowing the Tablelands to be owned and operated by the private sector. Some examples of potential uses include a commercial office building, boutique hotel, seniors' residence, a bed and breakfast, and dance/martial arts studios.

To evaluate the scenarios, six equally weighted criteria are proposed. These criteria reflect consideration of three critical areas: Financial, Environmental/Heritage and Social. The criteria include:

1. **Net Financial Implication**
2. **Economic Opportunities and Benefits**
3. **Compatibility with Natural Resources**
4. **Compatibility with Heritage Resources**
5. **Compatibility with Surrounding Uses**
6. **Opportunities for Access to Recreation/Social Interactions**

Each of the six criteria has a number of attributes associated with them and is described below:

The **Net Financial Implication** criteria assesses capital cost recovery, additional capital investment required, revenue generation potential, opportunities to offset municipal expenditures elsewhere including offsetting expenditures for improvements to valleylands or tablelands, and ongoing operating costs. All of these attributes are evaluated together to estimate a net financial cost or gain to the Town. The lower the Net Financial implication (the lower the cost to the Town), the higher the score.

The **Economic Opportunities and Benefits** criteria assesses the use scenario's market potential, economic benefit to the Town and Region, and opportunities for Private Sector Participation. For example, an educational/institutional use that attracts students from the region and beyond could have greater economic opportunities and benefits than town uses and programming. A use scenario with higher economic benefit and opportunity would result in a higher score.

The **Compatibility with Natural Resources** criteria assesses the use scenario's support for environmental principles and whether it contrasts or impacts the natural resources on the property. For example, development in any use scenario could have a greater impact on natural resources on both tableland and valleyland than leaving the site in its current state. A use scenario with less impact on natural resources is considered more compatible and would result in a higher score.

The **Compatibility with Heritage Resources** criteria assesses the use scenario's support for heritage principles and whether it contrasts with or impacts heritage resources. For example, altering the Jones-Puckrin House for an artists' residence or gift shop may not support heritage principles. A use scenario with less impact on heritage resources is considered more compatible and would result in a higher score.

The **Compatibility with Surrounding Uses** criteria assesses neighbourhood compatibility, impacts on valleyland passive recreation uses, and compatibility with the Central Park concept. For example, a use scenario that is noisy and generates a lot of traffic could be less compatible with current and future neighbourhoods and could impact residents' use and enjoyment of the valleyland. This criteria also examines opportunities for physical or gateway access to Central Park. A use scenario that is more compatible with surrounding uses would generate a higher score.

The **Opportunities for Access to Recreation/Social Interactions** criteria assesses the use scenario's accommodation of informal social/recreation uses and town programming for community benefit. For example, a private sector use scenario may provide less community use and programming opportunities than a town-owned facility scenario. More opportunities for public use and programming would generate a higher score.

A summary table of the evaluation criteria is provided below:

| Criteria | Scoring | Description |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Net Financial Implication | 0 | High Net Financial Implication |
| | 5 | Low Net Financial Implication |
| 2. Economic Opportunities and Benefits | 0 | Low Economic Benefit |
| | 5 | High Economic Benefit |
| 3. Compatibility with Natural Resources | 0 | Low Compatibility |
| | 5 | High Compatibility |
| 4. Compatibility with Heritage Resources | 0 | Low Compatibility |
| | 5 | High Compatibility |
| 5. Compatibility with Surrounding Uses | 0 | Low Compatibility |
| | 5 | High Compatibility |
| 6. Opportunities for Access to Recreation/Social Interactions | 0 | Low Potential |
| | 5 | High Potential |

6.0 COMMUNICATION ISSUES/PLAN:

The next step in the study process involves a public workshop to present the recommendations contained within this report and to provide the opportunity for input into proposed uses. This meeting is scheduled to occur May 22nd 2008. It will be held at Heydenshore Pavilion.

7.0 CONSIDERATIONS:

A. PUBLIC

See comments above under Communications.

B. FINANCIAL

The Study is funded from the Community and Marketing Services Department Capital Budget.

A key requirement of the Terms of Reference is to assess the financial implications to the municipality of any proposed plan. Indeed, the financial considerations are key to the use evaluation criteria.

C. IMPACT ON & INPUT FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS/SOURCES

Various Departments are represented on the Study Steering Committee. Specific impacts to Departments will not be known until final recommendations are drafted.

D. CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Study supports the following strategic actions of the Whitby Community Strategic Plan:

1.5 develop a comprehensive trail and open space network

2.1 identify and promote the conservation and management of heritage and natural resources

2.2 enhance the linkage of natural and open space areas

4.3 Develop short and long term business plans

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Staff recommend that the valleyland portion of Cullen Central Park be reserved for passive and active recreation, conservation and flood/erosion control uses only. Furthermore, all development and maintenance activities should conform to the Key Considerations developed in Phase 1 of the Cullen Central Park Master Plan study.

Phase 2 and 3 involves identifying potential uses for the tableland and assessing them. Three general use scenarios and evaluation criteria were developed for Council to review.

A public workshop will be held at Heydenshore Pavilion on May 22, 2008.

9.0 ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 Summary of Potential Uses for each scenario

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