

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 **WARD(S):** ALL

TITLE: NORTH MAPLE REGIONAL PARK PROGRAM UPDATE
FEBRUARY 2023

FROM:

Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on active projects and initiatives to advance the 900-acre park vision for North Maple Regional Park (NMRP).

Report Highlights

- In December 2022 Council reaffirmed NMRP as a Term of Council priority for 2022-2026 and approved establishing an Ad-Hoc Committee for NMRP.
- The NMRP Program team continues to develop a comprehensive work program that will guide park development over the next 10-years and beyond.
- Construction of the Enabling Works site grading and servicing on 130 acres of parkland continues in-progress and is approximately 30% complete.
- A Federal Grant application was submitted to the Natural Infrastructure Fund to support NMRP wetland expansion and to create an Eco-Classroom within the park.
- The feasibility review for a National Soccer Training Centre (NSTC) at NMRP is in progress and is moving to the concept design stage.
- Staff continue to meet with organizations interested in potential partnership opportunities at NMRP including opportunities related to the NSTC.
- Opportunities to expand the park into former landfill areas continue to be explored with key stakeholders, MECP and City of Toronto.
- A community engagement and park master plan process for the 900-acre park vision is being planned for 2023.

Recommendation

1. THAT this report be received for information.

Background

The 900-acre North Maple Regional Park (NMRP) is the City's most ambitious park development to date with a vision to create a nationally significant signature park and legacy project for future generations. Key objectives for implementing the NMRP vision are focused around activities related to restoring nature, sharing culture, promoting active living and building community.

In September 2018, the first phase of NMRP was opened to the public and the park hosted over 18,000 visitors to celebrate Canada Day on July 1, 2019. The next phases of park development are currently in motion. While construction is advancing, NMRP continued to host a variety of programs and events in 2022 including Ride for Sick Kids, Run 4 Vaughan, Strides for Seniors and the Canada Soccer U-18 National Championships, which is the largest amateur team sport competition in Canada.

In December 2022 Council affirmed NMRP as a Term of Council priority and approved establishing an Ad-Hoc Committee of Council to help guide the NMRP Program. A Terms of Reference for this committee is currently being developed.

Construction of the Enabling Works are progressing well with grading and servicing to continue throughout 2023

Enabling Works design and construction activities are approximately 30% complete. Scope of work includes site preparation, bulk grading and servicing of approximately 130 acres of the site to prepare this area for future park development. As part of this contract the existing vehicular park driveway, Vaughan CARES Way, will be expanded and a second access to Keele Street will be constructed. Installation of traffic signals at the main Keele Street park entrance was approved by Council in December 2022 and a request has been forwarded to the Region for their review and approval.

As part of the Enabling Works, additional park pathways will be installed including accessible paved pathways, boardwalk areas and nature trails. The design-build team is also currently refining plans for the proposed cricket field area, events area, and family recreation area to inform the overall grading and servicing requirements for these areas. A key component of the Enabling Works involves the capture and effective use of surface water and storm water drainage to ensure park facilities and programs can safely function during peak storm events and throughout all seasons. Pond and wetland expansion works are currently in-progress by the TRCA. The Enabling Works will advance throughout 2023 and are expected to be completed in 2024.

A Federal Grant application was submitted to the Natural Infrastructure Fund (NIF) that can be applied towards the wetland improvement areas

The ecological significance and natural environment of NMRP play a key role in the park vision. As part of the Phase 2 Enabling Works environmental restoration, ecological enhancement and connection of the existing pond, wetland and habitat areas are being advanced. Environmental restoration is a priority in this work as it includes removing existing invasive species of trees, grasses and shrubs which will be replanted with native plants in a way that improves the ecological health of the site.

In October 2022, staff submitted a grant application to the NIF to fund NMRP wetland expansion and to create an Eco-Classroom in the park. The objective of this project is to enhance and expand the ecologic function of the existing wetland areas and to develop site features that promote and provide access to the public, school groups and events to function as an outdoor Eco-Classroom for community engagement. Federal announcements are expected in Q1 2023 and upon a successful outcome, staff will begin to advance design concepts for the Eco-Classroom.

Feasibility review for a National Soccer Training Centre (NSTC) at NMRP is in progress and is moving into the concept design stage

In May of 2022 Canada Soccer and the City of Vaughan executed a Memorandum Of Understanding formalizing a partnership to explore feasibility of developing a NSTC at NMRP. Program elements under consideration for the NSTC include indoor training facilities for high-performance and community use, an open-air stadium, outdoor training pitches, Canada Soccer administrative offices, media centre and supporting uses. Space-sharing opportunities exist within the scope of NSTC facilities and attracting additional partners to this project could provide alternative funding opportunities. Staff continue to explore potential partnership opportunities for compatible third-party partners or tenants within the NSTC and for the entire 900-acre vision of NMRP.

The first phase of an RFP process to retain a multi-disciplinary consultant design team to undertake concept design, technical studies, and cost estimating for the NSTC was recently awarded and a joint design team including City staff and representatives from Canada Soccer is established. A report back to Council on the concept design options and planning considerations for the NSTC is planned for Q2 2023.

A Community Engagement and Park Master Plan process for the 900-acre NMRP vision is being planned for 2023

Advancing the 900-acre vision for NMRP continues to be supported as a Term of Council priority initiative and the park continues to be a popular destination for residents and visitors. To help guide the planning for future phases of park development, staff are preparing the Terms of Reference for an RFP for consulting services to lead a Community Engagement and Park Master Plan process to begin in Q3 2023. A key goal of this project is to foster collaboration across the community to explore what programs, activities and facilities are desired for NMRP and how the City can effectively plan to make provision for these in the coming years. Development of a 900-acre park is a generational project and having a strong vision and Master Plan in place will be an important guide for the future. The final Master Plan document is also required to help inform final closure plans for the former landfill areas which require technical reports and studies to be submitted for approval by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Previous Reports/Authority

[NORTH MAPLE REGIONAL PARK PROGRAM UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2022](#)

Analysis and Options

Development of a park of this magnitude is a significant undertaking. A staff team in the Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development Department within the Infrastructure Development Portfolio has been established to lead the planning, design and development of the Council-approved 900-acre vision for NMRP, with support from departments across the entire corporation. A comprehensive work program continues to be established to provide a clear plan, communications and timing that will guide park development over the next 10-years and beyond.

A brief update of current program activities of the NMRP Program team is provided as follows:

1. Capital Program + Planning

- Continue to refine 5-year and 10-year capital development plans and budgets in collaboration with Finance Services and Program Management Office (PMO)
- Finalizing engagement with DTAH consulting to support capital planning and to provide strategic advice for future park master plan and community engagement
- Coordination with City departments for the seamless transition of design and construction for the multi-use pathway along Keele Street fronting the NMRP entrance

- Continue engagement with York Region related to the Teston Road IEA and Dufferin Road EA processes and their relationship to vehicular and active transportation connections with NMRP
- Actively preparing the RFP for consulting services to lead a community engagement and park master plan process for the entire 900-acre park area

2. Project Design + Management

- 100% completion of construction of Federal ICIP COVID-19 Resiliency grant funding trail improvement works
- 30% completion of construction of Enabling Works and 75% detailed design completion for site grading, servicing and ecological restoration of 130 acres of parkland
- Finalized and awarded the first phase of an RFP to retain a multi-disciplinary consultant design team to undertake concept design, technical studies, and cost estimating for the NSTC
- Preparing park and trail signage standards for temporary and permanent installations in 2023
- Exploring design opportunities for the cricket field area, events area, and family recreation area
- Developing preliminary concepts for the Eco-Classroom in anticipation of successful award of the NIF Grant

3. Engagement + Communications

- Preparing a community engagement plan to support current park programs and events
- Discussions with other potential partners and sports organizations in relation to the proposed National Soccer Training Centre
- Continuing discussions for potential partnership and enhancement opportunities for the north cricket pitch at NMRP
- Continued discussions with Corte Group with ideas to address growing demand for pickleball courts in Vaughan
- Continued discussions with adjacent land owner York Major Holdings regarding opportunities to incorporate the Testonview Holdings Inc. private landfill site into future park plans
- Discussions with organizations interested in providing programs and facilities for family recreation opportunities and outdoor winter fun activities

4. Environmental + Regulatory

- Discussions on requirements and opportunities for preparing the Vaughan Township Landfill Site for park development within the next 5 years
- Discussions on strategy, requirements, and timing for transforming the 380-acre Keele Valley Landfill Site into public parkland
- Progressing construction and ecological restoration of the two existing Provincially Significant Wetland areas within the 130 acre Enabling Works site and associated off-site habitat compensation requirements
- Responding to site conditions and species at risk regulatory requirements, design adjustments and related construction considerations
- Continuing Record of Site Condition (RSC) technical studies within the 130 acre Enabling Works site
- Development of a Request for Prequalification and RFP for landfill qualified expert consulting team

5. Park Stewardship

- Initiation of a trail signage program and development of story panels for education and awareness of NMRP park history, key landscape and ecological features and wayfinding
- Continuing engagement with consultant Cam Collyer, Senior Advisor with Evergreen and Principal of People and Place Consulting Strategy & Engagement to support planning and delivery of community engagement, park programs and activations

6. Program Management

- Completed recruitment for a new Project Manager, 4-year secondment position to support the NSTC and park Master Plan process
- Initiating recruitment for 1 new Project Manager, 4-year secondment position to support priority projects including the landfill expansion areas
- Continue to explore financial sustainability and funding opportunities including grants, sponsorships, advertising and naming rights with internal departments
- Identifying areas requiring policy and park quality standards development for NMRP capital and operating levels of service
- Supporting Clerks with development of Terms of Reference for the new Ad-Hoc Committee for NMRP approved by Council

Financial Impact

The NMRP Program continues to be funded from approved Capital Project PK-6636-19 which supports implementation of capital projects, consulting services, administration

and project management. Staff continue to seek potential partnerships and funding opportunities including Federal and Provincial grants, advertising and program sponsorships to help advance the 900-acre vision for NMRP.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Completion of the NMRP project requires continued discussion and coordination with a variety of external agencies and stakeholders, including communication plans and potential funding announcements as applicable.

Conclusion

Advancing the 900-acre vision for NMRP continues to be a Term of Council priority and transformation of the park continues. A dedicated staff team is in place to lead implementation of the NMRP Program and a comprehensive work program is being established to provide a clear plan, communications and timing that will guide park development over the next 10-years and beyond.

For more information, please contact:

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Attachment

1. NMRP 900-acre Vision map of park boundaries and key property areas

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