

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 **WARD(S):** ALL

TITLE: SNOW TUBING AND WINTER RECREATION AT NORTH MAPLE REGIONAL PARK

FROM:

Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To report back on Council direction for proposed snow tubing and winter recreation activities at North Maple Regional Park (NMRP).

Report Highlights

- In February 2023, Council received an update on the NMRP Program and a deputation from Gateway Parks presenting an interest in developing and operating snow tubing and other winter recreation activities at NMRP.
- Council directed staff to meet with Gateway Parks to explore the potential of developing a public-private-partnership and to explore alternative vendors to ensure competitive partnerships and report back before the end of Q2 2023.
- A formal Request for Expression of Interest (RFEOI) process was issued by Procurement Services on April 5, 2023 and closed on April 21, 2023.
- A total of one (1) submission to the RFEOI was received with Gateway Parks Group the only Respondent to this process.
- Based on the results of the RFEOI and direction received from Council, staff will continue discussions with Gateway Parks Group to explore terms of an agreement for them to design, build, operate and maintain snowtubing and associated winter recreation uses on a portion on lands at NMRP.
- A report back to Council will be provided when key terms and details of a proposed arrangement are confirmed.

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 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.

NMRP continues to attract a large number of visitors, even during the winter season to enjoy tobogganing, winter walks and other outdoor activities

At the February 14, 2023, Committee of the Whole (2) meeting, the City received a deputation from the Gateway Parks Group with an interest in providing snow tubing and winter recreation activities at NMRP. Council directed staff to meet with Gateway Parks Group to discuss their ideas in further detail as well as explore alternative vendors to ensure competitive partnership opportunities, and report back before the end of Q2 2023.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Item 7, Report No. 9 of the Committee of the Whole \(2\), which was adopted without amendment on February 22, 2023](#)

[Communication C5: Committee of the Whole \(2\) February 14, 2023, Item #7](#)

Analysis and Options

In April 2023 an RFEOI was issued by Procurement Services to explore market interest in providing snow tubing and winter recreational programming at NMRP

Following Council direction, staff issued an RFEOI to explore alternative vendors with interest in providing winter recreational services at NMRP. The RFEOI was publicly issued on Bids and Tenders on April 5, 2023 for a period of two weeks and closed on April 21, 2023. The objective of the RFEOI was to gather information to help identify the current market interest of potential vendors for providing winter recreational services at NMRP. Services and deliverables requested included: formal public viewing areas that provide proper seating arrangements for visitors to stay warm with clear views of the winter activities, equipment for winter activities within the park facility, such as skating, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, and a snow-tubing experience with minimal risks. A total of one (1) proposal was received by Procurement Services in response to the RFEOI, which was submitted by Gateway Parks Group (GPG).

GPG is a progressive snow tubing and winter recreational vendor with over 13 years of experience in Ontario and parts of the United States. The City's vision for NMRP aligns with the vendor's goal of providing a local affordable outdoor experience while enjoying amenities found at world-class resorts.

Council also directed staff to continue to meet with Gateway Parks to explore their ideas and the potential of developing a public-private-partnership. One key consideration for snow tubing operations and related uses is the need for an adequate water supply source for snowmaking. Additional time is needed to work through various aspects of a potential partnership arrangement with Gateway Parks Group and staff will plan to report back to Council when key terms and details of a proposed arrangement are confirmed.

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.

Operational Impact

The operational impact of proposed capital development items (living and fixed assets) will be determined through the design development phases of this project.

Communication and collaboration with affected operating departments will occur regularly throughout this project and financial implications will be identified as required for consideration in future budget submissions. There are no immediate operational impacts associated with the recommendations of this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

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

Conclusion

Following Council direction, staff met with Gateway Parks to explore the potential of developing a public-private-partnership for snow tubing and other winter recreation activities. Staff also issued an RFEOI with Procurement Services to explore alternative vendors to ensure competitive partnerships. Based on the results of the RFEOI process, with only one (1) bid received from Gateway Parks Group, staff will continue to explore

their ideas in more detail and will report back to Council when key details and a proposed arrangement is confirmed.

For more information, please contact: Jamie Bronsema, Director, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development, ext. 8858

Attachment

1. Gateway Parks Expression of Interest

Prepared by

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, NMRP Program, ext. 8433

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Musacchio'.

Vince Musacchio, DCM
Infrastructure Development

Reviewed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri'.

Nick Spensieri, City Manager