

## Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

**From:** Cheryl Smith, Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and  
Community-Wide Services

Kelly Scherr, Deputy City Manager, Environment and  
Infrastructure

**Subject:** Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund

**Date:** September 17, 2024

## Recommendation

That on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager of Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services and the Deputy City Manager of Environment and Infrastructure, the report dated September 17, 2024, regarding “Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund” **BE RECEIVED** for information.

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed implementation plan including guidelines, structure, proposed project list, public engagement framework, and communications plans for the Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund. This implementation plan is a follow-up to the additional funding included in the City of London 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget for the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

## Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

The Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund is aligned with the Strategic Area of Focus Wellbeing and Safety, as presented in the City of London Strategic Plan 2023-2027:

- Outcome: London has safe, vibrant, and healthy neighbourhoods and communities.
- Expected Result: Londoners have safe access to public spaces, services, and supports that increase wellbeing and quality of life.
- Strategy: Invest in publicly-owned facilities, parks, open spaces, and natural amenities that provide cultural, social, and recreational opportunities, programming, and engagement.

## Analysis

### 1.0 Background Information

#### 1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- [Parks and Recreation Master Plan Annual Report \(CPSC: March 18, 2024\).](#)
- [Parks and Recreation Master Plan Annual Report \(CPSC: January 31, 2023\)](#)
- [Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update \(CPSC June 17, 2019\)](#)

#### 1.2 Background and Purpose

The Mayor’s Property Tax Supported Budget (2024-2027) provided funding for an additional four million dollars (\$4M) for the implementation of currently unfunded initiatives within the Parks and Recreation Master Plan through the Community

Investment Reserve Fund. On March 1, 2024, this funding was deemed adopted through the City of London 2024–2027 Multi-Year Budget process.

The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed implementation plan including guidelines, structure, proposed project list, public engagement framework, and communications plans for the additional \$4M in funding, referred to as the Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund.

The Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund is aligned to the [Parks and Recreation Master Plan \(Master Plan\)](#), which was approved by Council on June 25, 2019. The Master Plan provides an overall vision, direction, and guidance for planning and making decisions about parks, open spaces, environmental management, recreation programs, sport services, and facilities in London. It is informed by public input and is aligned to local, provincial, and federal policies, strategies, best practices, trends, demographics, and growth forecasts.

The City of London offers high quality parks, open spaces, recreation programs, sport services, and facilities that engage residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. The City plays a significant role in community building through the facilitation of active and passive activities, opportunities for structured and spontaneous play, and strengthening of neighbourhood connections, guided by the Master Plan.

These services provide places for people of all ages and abilities to be active and learn new skills, connect with one another, share their interests, exchange ideas, and experience diversity. They also contribute to larger outcomes in the city, such as engaging children in active play, decreasing childhood obesity, poverty reduction, improved mental health, city building and the creation of healthy and safe neighbourhoods, economic health, sport tourism initiatives, environmental management and protection, connecting with and developing an appreciation of nature, cultural prosperity, and more.

The Master Plan contains a series of recommendations, some of which refer to discrete projects or actions and others that provide ongoing and incremental guidance. The City of London manages between 200 to 250 parks projects of varying sizes annually to meet the goals of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Some of these projects were outlined in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Annual Report to Community and Protective Services. The Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund will inject additional funds to help leverage and/or enhance some of these existing projects, support new projects, and accelerate and enhance park amenities across the city.

## **2.0 Discussion and Considerations**

### **2.1 Proposed Program Guidelines**

In order to implement the Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund in the current Multi-Year Budget Cycle without impacting current and approved parks projects and committed resources, guidelines are required to help scope what can be accomplished over the next three to four years.

Proposed program guidelines:

- projects must be planned and implemented in 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027;
- individual projects will cost between \$50,000 and \$500,000;
- projects will align with Council’s Strategic Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan goals;
- projects will be geographically distributed across the city;
- projects will fill a gap and/or meet a community need; and,
- projects will provide value to diverse user groups and support equity and inclusion.

Should it be desired to adjust the above program guidelines, additional funding to support the implementation of the Neighbourhood Park Improvement Fund projects will be required to avoid impacting the delivery of the existing and approved Parks capital plan.

## 2.2 Proposed Program Structure

The four million dollars (\$4M) in funds will potentially support up to 23 projects (9 multi-Ward scale parks projects and 14 neighbourhood/Ward specific parks projects). Appendix A attached identifies the proposed list of parks and potential projects. Appendix B attached provides a map of the locations of the proposed projects along with the parks infrastructure projects included in the Multi-Year Budget (2024-2027). The details of each project will be finalized by Civic Administration based on detailed reviews of specific park feasibility and feedback from residents through a range of engagement activities.

## 2.3 Community Engagement

Through programs such as Neighbourhood Decision Making, previous park engagement activities/forums, and ongoing resident feedback and requests, Civic Administration has collected a number of ideas and suggestions from Londoners as to what they would like to see in parks across the city. Existing engagement data and results have been assessed based on the program guidelines and leveraged to identify proposed projects as outlined in Appendix A.

Project specific engagement will follow the City of London's Community Engagement Policy, including notification of neighbours if a new amenity is proposed and other specific engagement methods as appropriate.

## 2.4 Communications

A GetInvolved web page will be established to identify the projects, timing, and locations. In addition, the website will be a key tool for community engagement for each project. Signage will be placed at the park locations identifying the Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund as the source of funding for the individual projects.

In addition, projects to be implemented will be confirmed in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Annual Report to Community and Protective Services. As projects are completed, events will be organized to celebrate with the community.

## 3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

Four million dollars (\$4M) will be provided through the Community Investment Reserve Fund as identified through the Multi-Year Budget process. There is no tax levy impact.

Impacts on operational and lifecycle budgets required to support these projects will be avoided where possible to maintain existing budgets. If future funding is required, it will be requested through the next Multi-Year Budget process.

## Conclusion

The Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund will provide new and updated amenities to parks across the city. Four million dollars (\$4M) has been allocated to the fund and projects and will be implemented starting in 2024. This funding will add additional amenities to London's park system, and it will support residents to build community and stay active. The projects will enhance existing work planned across the city in general alignment with the City of London's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

**Prepared by:** Donna Baxter, Manager, Policy, Planning and Research  
Jeff Bruin, Manager, Parks Design and Construction

**Submitted by:** Kristen Pawelec, Director, Community Development and Grants  
Paul Yeoman, Director, Parks and Forestry

**Recommended by:** Cheryl Smith, Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services  
Kelly Scherr, Deputy City Manager, Environment and Infrastructure

## Appendix A:

This appendix outlines a preliminary list of proposed Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund projects. Project locations and amenities are subject to change based on site specific conditions and public input.

### MULTI-NEIGHBOURHOODS PROJECTS

Park	Address	Project Description	Location
Silverwoods Park	50 Sycamore Street	New tennis and pickleball courts	Southeast
South East Optimist Park	237 Deveron Crescent	New and enhanced play equipment and full basketball court	Southwest
White Oaks Park	1119 Jalna Boulevard	New and enhanced play equipment (east of Fennel Cres), acrylic surface on pickleball court*	Southwest
Lambeth Centennial Park	7112 Beattie Street	New pickleball courts and practice Cricket multi-batting cage facility	Southwest
Wonderland/ Riverside	520 Riverside Drive	Improved paddling/river access, scattering ashes site, and public gathering space	Northwest
West Lions Park	20 Granville Street	New and enhanced skateboarding facilities	Northwest
Stronach Park	1221 Sandford Street	New and enhanced play equipment	Northeast
Hastings Park	1428 Hastings Drive	Addition of acrylic surfacing on existing pickleball and tennis courts	Northeast
Richard B. Harrison Park	205 South Street	New and enhanced play equipment and basketball court	Central

### NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECTS

Park	Address	Project Description	Location
Vauxhall Park	49 Price Street	Improved play equipment and swings	Ward 1
Kiwanis Park North	612 Hale Street	New pickleball courts and half basketball court	Ward 2
Huronview Park	1345 Bentley Drive	New shade structure and picnic tables	Ward 3
Mornington Park	800 High Holborn St	New cricket batting cage	Ward 4
Foresthill Park	1955 Rolling Acres Drive	New shade structure and improved soccer field	Ward 5
North London Athletic Fields	1207 Adelaide Street N	New play equipment	Ward 6
Kent Park	2715 Buroak Drive	New and enhanced playground equipment and seating	Ward 7
Oak Park	1207 Royal York Road	New exercise equipment and picnic tables	Ward 8
Regiment Park	3290 Regiment Road	New basketball court* and seating*	Ward 9
Arthur Ford Park	670 Viscount Road	Improved tennis court and seating	Ward 10

<b>Park</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Murray Park	75 Cliftonvale Avenue	New basketball court* and seating*	Ward 11
Bateman Trail Park	2875 Bateman Trail	New picnic area and shade structure	Ward 12
Blackfriars Park	2 Cummings Avenue	New play equipment and seating	Ward 13
St. Stephens Park	1030 Wellington Road	New play equipment and seating	Ward 14

\* Projects targeted for completion in 2024

## Appendix B:

### Locations of Neighbourhood Parks Improvement Fund Proposed Projects and Planned Parks Infrastructure Projects (2024-2027)

