

## Preliminary review of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

A working group (WG) was formed to review the Parks & Recreation Master plan (P&RMP) in the light of presentation made on P&RMP-update before the the TFAC dated May 23.

P&RMP is a comprehensive document developed over the years so it was not possible to have complete review in one session of WG meeting however deliberations were made on the presentation's contents against the backdrop of P&RMP. Nevertheless WG will keep working on P&RMP review, a little bit more detailed/formal document on proposed recommendations may be shared in July 24th meeting for TFAC's approval and onward communication to staff.

The intent of the May 23rd presentation on P&RMP-update was to seek the input from TFAC on following points:

- a. Community Survey ( [getinvolved.london.ca](http://getinvolved.london.ca))
  - b. Share information with staff about groups/organizations which may be invited to stakeholder sessions.
  - c. TFAC's written response to the questions
  - d. TFAC's comments on P&RMP 2009 and its interim update (Jan 2017)
- **Guiding Questions:**
    1. Most pressing issues and priorities for TFAC
    2. How Parks, recreation and Sport services continue to support TFAC.
    3. How TFAC, City and others work together to meet future needs.
    4. Initiatives those are being contemplated, planned or are implemented that could tie into priorities for parks, recreations and sport services and facilities.

WG has considered and discussed each point in details, the crux of discussion have been summarized as follow:

### a) Community Survey:

Community survey launched by city staff is a well designed comprehensive survey contains 23 carefully crafted questions. Efforts made through survey is not only to obtain opinion from Londoners about their satisfaction on Parks & recreation related facilities available in city but also citizens are encouraged and provided with opportunity so they may propose any new facility/service they feel currently not available but would like to see be made available by the City.

Keeping in view the implementation of P&RMP during next decade, it is very important that special efforts may be made by city and advisory committees to maximize the

participation by Londoners of all active/effective age groups in the survey so that their input & suggestions may be incorporated in Jan 2019 P&RMP-update. Thanks to social media, we are all connected and virtually online with each other all the times. It is far easy to reach into masses in present days as compared with recent past when electronic and print media were the main players for information dissemination. Everyone with a smart phone equipped with social and mass interaction apps like, Facebook, WhatsApp, Youtube, etc is potentially roaming around with a broadcast/telecast gateway station in his/her hand.

### **Recommendations:**

- Social media may greatly increase the participation of Londoners in the survey. Effective use of social media may be applied to disseminate information about the survey and persuade Londoners to participate and provide their input. A Facebook page showing this 'Survey' as an important virtual event in London, may be developed & deployed by the TFAC. This Facebook page may be shared among circles of friends in London as well as with other Advisory committees so their members may also share within their circles to persuade Londoners to participate in survey.
- Electronic kiosks and Printed version of survey may be made available at designated stalls at :
  - Special events places (e.g Victoria park)
  - Crowded places like covent garden market etc
  - Shopping malls, plaza's
  - Community centres and recreation facilities
  - Public Libraries
  - Worshipping places etc so visitors may have opportunity to participate if they have missed other communication mediums.
- The Survey was supposed to be in multiple languages to extent its better understandability and reach to all ethnic communities in London. If possible other languages modules may be developed and deployed asap.
- Presently survey will remain open till July 23, if possible its date may be extended to end of July.

### **b) Share information with staff about groups/organizations which may be invited to stakeholder sessions.**

Stakeholder sessions were held on May 28, 30 and June 4. Though date has been passed for these sessions but TFAC may still identify interested groups/ organizations and communicate their contacts to staff so they may be contacted during additional public engagement period in late 2018.

### **c) TFAC's written response to the questions**

Response to the questions have been provided under *Guide Questions* section below.

### **e) TFAC's comments on P&RMP 2009 and its interim update (Jan 2017)**

WG is still reviewing the P&RMP 2009 and its interim update (Jan 2017). A more detailed document will be shared in July 24th TFAC meeting however, during WG meeting, in a preliminary review session, it has been felt that the inventory of athletic and community facilities presently available is somewhat narrow. According to 2016 census, 56% of population falls in age group of 35-69yrs age group, 11% falls in 10-19yrs and 22% falls in 20-34yrs age group. In order to promote healthy physical activities specially among these age groups a wider variety of sports and recreational facilities are in demand by our community.

### **Recommendations:**

- A good example about narrow inventory of athletic and community facilities would be trampoline parks as three private businesses opened up in London this past year.
- Rock Climbing facilities are also quite popular and could be offered at a city facility.
- Cricket was once the most popular sport in Canada until the early 20th Century before it was overtaken by hockey. Due to its popularity at that time it was declared the national sport by Sir John A. Macdonald, the first Prime Minister of Canada. Cricket, today, is a popular minority sport in Canada but it is growing very fast, presently there are well over 40,000 cricketers across the nation. There used to be only one Cricket club in London, but during last 5 years due to increasing popularity of Cricket, 5-6 more clubs have emerged. To cater for space requirement for these groups City added a cricket Pitch at North London Athletic fields during 2014 but due to increasing numbers of new clubs players need more facilities both in indoor and outdoor settings.

## **Guiding Questions**

### **1. Issues and Priorities**

- Green spaces and recreation facilities often accompany each other. Trees will always be a part of the equation. Ensuring that trees continue to populate our recreational areas, where they can be enjoyed by everyone. Planting should consider realistic operational needs of recreational facilities. Maintenance operations, parking, etc.

## 4.1

- Making sure that the trees of London are well taken care of, as they represent the city's namesake, and that more trees continue to be planted on streets, private land, and shared recreational areas, while keeping as many of the older ones as possible.
- Future trimming and maintenance work could be held in priority to ensure safety to families and patrons.
- Ensuring that London's citizens value their legacy by actively engaging them in helping to maintain the trees on public and private lands, and planting more.

## **2. Recreation Services and Facilities Support**

- Parks and Recreation facilities are a good opportunity for community awareness related to tree issues. Utilize signage and extra space in the facilities to offer information to residents about related planting, naturalization, ongoing efforts of reforest London, etc.
- By including tree plantings and tree maintenance feature in all parks and recreational areas, and engaging public participation in planting activities.
- Let tree related communities can use these facilities to have events (reforest London tree giveaway).
- By encouraging engagement in outdoor recreational spaces through sporting activities and other events throughout the year (including activities that involve the trees themselves such as zip lining, tree climbing, etc.)
- Setting out more picnic tables in parks across the city to encourage use by citizens and tourists.
- Increase the number of dog parks throughout the city so that more people can access one within their area (there is a real community feel in these parks where people like to gather and chat with other dog owners); maintain the trees and shrubs in these parks to keep the parklike aesthetic.”

### **3. How can TFAC, City and other work together.**

- Awareness of trees, tree health, planting, benefits, etc. need to be communicated to the public and these facilities are great opportunities to do so.
- Widely promoting opportunities for public engagement/feedback, open dialogue, etc., in city planning – and then listening to that input.
- By including environmental groups, businesses, tree related communities and , Advisory committees like ACE, EEPAC, AAC in discussions and plans for London's future urban forest

### **3. Initiatives.**

- Continue to plant more trees in public spaces, but also encourage the public, through wide-scale advertising, to help care for the trees planted in each neighbourhood park (helping to water, etc.) to reduce the number of trees lost to weather conditions. (The hope being that in doing so, residents would feel more invested in ensuring the trees in their parks do well.)

**Marge Szabo**

**Alex . Morrison**

**Tariq Khan**