

## Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Community and Protective Services Committee

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

**Subject:** Oakridge Resident Engagement Results

**Date:** March 29, 2022

### Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager of Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services:

- a) The short-term project, upgrades to tennis courts in Oakridge Optimist Park, identified through resident engagement near the Oakridge Assessment Centre **BE ENDORSED**;
- b) The budget for the short-term project, upgrades to tennis courts in Oakridge Optimist Park, **BE APPROVED** in accordance with the Sources of Financing Report attached hereto as Appendix "A"; and,
- c) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to proceed with implementation of the upgrades to tennis courts in Oakridge Optimist Park, it being noted that this work will be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy.

### Executive Summary

As a way for the City of London to express gratitude to Oakridge area residents for hosting a COVID-19 Assessment Centre, Civic Administration undertook an engagement process to find out what residents would like to see as enhancements, activities, or events in their neighbourhood. Oakridge residents submitted ideas, and then voted on which ideas they would like to see implemented most. Residents voted on both short-term and long-term ideas. The short-term idea that received the most votes was upgrades to tennis courts in Oakridge Optimist Park, while the long-term idea that received the most votes was a revitalization of the Oakridge Arena or a new community centre in Oakridge.

### Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

Community engagement is aligned with the following strategic area of focus, as presented in the City of London Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

- Strengthening Our Community – Londoners are engaged and have a sense of belonging in their neighbourhoods and community.

### Analysis

#### 1.0 Background Information

##### 1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- None

## 1.1 Background and Purpose

At its meeting held on August 10, 2021, Municipal Council resolved that the following actions be taken with respect to the communication, dated July 6, 2021, from Councillors S. Lehman and J. Helmer and Mayor E. Holder, related to Recognizing the Impact of Hosting COVID-19 Assessment Centres at Oakridge Arena and Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre:

- a) the Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to consult residents, especially those close to the COVID-19 assessment centres, about priorities for new recreational amenities or upgrades to existing recreational amenities in the general area; and,
- b) the Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to explore potential provincial and federal funding opportunities for recreational infrastructure and to report back with recommended new or upgraded recreational amenities in the general area of both testing centres, along with a recommended source of financing.

The purpose of this report is to:

- outline the process taken to engage Oakridge area residents; and,
- provide the results of the resident engagement, including the recommended project to implement.

## 2.0 Discussion and Considerations

### 2.1 Resident Engagement Process and Results

A resident engagement process was launched in response to Council's direction. The engagement promoted opportunities for Oakridge area residents to share ideas of what they would like to see as enhancements, activities, or events in their neighbourhood as a thank you for hosting a COVID-19 Assessment Centre. The process was called "Oakridge Decides" and was modelled after the Neighbourhood Decision Making engagement process.

From November 2021 to February 2022, the Oakridge Decides engagement was implemented in two phases.

#### Phase I: Idea Submission

Residents were invited to share ideas for enhancements they would like to see in their neighbourhood. Ideas were submitted through the City's engagement website which provided residents with the opportunity to engage both with Civic Administration and each other. Ideas were then vetted by City Staff for feasibility.

Oakridge residents were very engaged through this phase. Engagement data included:

- over 1000 visits to the [getinvolved.london.ca/oakridge](https://getinvolved.london.ca/oakridge) site;
- 357 people indicating support for submitted ideas;
- 49 comments and 5 questions; and,
- 60% of residents indicated they learned about the opportunity from a postcard sent to their home.

Between November 2021 and January 2022, 84 idea submissions were received. After vetting all ideas for feasibility, 30 made it to the ballot.

#### Phase II: Vote on Top Ideas

Feasible ideas were added to a survey through which Oakridge area residents could vote for their top ideas. Voting options included: online, over the phone, or in person throughout the month of February. All residents, regardless of their age were invited to vote for up to three short-term ideas and one long-term idea.

A number of promotional tactics were used to reach residents, noting that in person engagement opportunities were limited at the time because of provincial and local COVID-19 health restrictions. Tactics included:

- creation and promotion of a unique engagement webpage (getinvolved.london.ca/oakridge) that acted as a central location for all updates and engagement opportunities;
- mobile signage in neighbourhood locations;
- postcards to every house in the Oakridge planning district;
- townhall meeting;
- targeted social media promotion; and,
- emails to residents and community groups.

The total number of votes cast was 430. The breakdown by voting option included:

- 373 online votes;
- 18 phone votes; and,
- 39 in person votes.

## **Winning Ideas**

### Short-term

Short-term ideas were defined as projects that can be completed within 1 to 2 years depending on seasonal constraints and COVID-19 impacts; and require less resources to implement.

The short-term idea that received the most votes was an upgrade to tennis courts in Oakridge Optimist Park. This idea involves resurfacing the tennis courts and painting new lines.

### Long-term

Long-term ideas were defined as projects that will take longer than 2 years to complete and may be contingent on additional funding from other levels of government, securing a suitable location, construction approval processes and public engagement.

The long-term idea that received the most votes was a revitalization of the Oakridge Arena or the creation of a separate community space in Oakridge for programming, storage of equipment, and community meetings and events.

There is no funding within the 10-year capital plan to expand the Oakridge Arena. In addition, this area of the city was not identified in the 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a priority location for new community centre space.

Civic Administration will look for opportunities to apply for applicable provincial and federal funding for revitalization of Oakridge Arena if and when it becomes available.

For the full list of submitted ideas and how many votes they received please see [Appendix B](#).

## **3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations**

The estimated cost to implement the upgrades to tennis courts in Oakridge Optimist Park is \$200,000. Subject to the approval of the recommendations in this report, a budget will be established for this amount and this work will be procured in accordance with the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy, not to exceed the \$200,000 budget. This project will not result in additional operating costs because it is an existing park amenity.

## **4.0 Next Steps**

Pending Council's approval, Civic Administration will aim to upgrade the tennis courts in

Oakridge Optimist Park within the next two years. Civic Administration will also explore potential provincial and federal funding opportunities for the long-term project, revitalization of the Oakridge Arena if and when they become available.

Once the COVID-19 Assessment Centre at Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre has concluded operations, Civic Administration will initiate a similar engagement process for surrounding residents.

## **Conclusion**

Oakridge residents expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to receive an enhancement in their neighbourhood as a thank you for hosting a COVID-19 Assessment Centre. In addition, positive comments were received about the engagement process and opportunities to contribute. The idea to upgrade the tennis courts in the Oakridge Optimist Park was well-received. These tennis courts are well-used by both Oakridge residents as well as the many Londoners who visit Oakridge Optimist Park. The information gathered from residents about what they would like to see in their neighbourhood will be shared across Service Areas and help inform future planning.

**Prepared by:** Kaitlyn Banuelos, Supervisor, Neighbourhood, Development and Support

**Submitted by:** Kristen Pawelec, Director, Community Development and Grants

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

**cc.** Anna Lisa Barbon, Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports  
Kelly Scherr, Deputy City Manager, Environment and Infrastructure  
Adam Thompson, Manager, Government and External Relations

Appendix "A"

#22037

March 29, 2022

(Establish Budget)

Chair and Members

Community and Protective Services Committee

RE: Oakridge Resident Engagement Results - Repairs to Tennis Courts in Oakridge Optimist Park  
New Capital Project PK1101-Tennis Courts Repairs - Oakridge Optimist Park - Covid Engagement

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**Finance Supports Report on the Sources of Financing:**

Finance Supports confirms that there is no existing financing in the Capital Budget and that, subject to the approval of the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager of Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services, the detailed source of financing is:

<b>Estimated Expenditures</b>	<b>Approved Budget</b>	<b>Additional Requirement (Note 1)</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>
Construction	0	200,000	200,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>Sources of Financing</b>			
Capital Receipts	0	200,000	200,000
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>

Note 1: The additional requirement can be accommodated by a transfer from previously released pay-as-you-go funding. Through the 2020 Year-End Capital Budget Monitoring Report and COVID-19 Impacts (Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, April 27, 2021), recommendation c), \$213,000 of surplus pay-as-you-go funding was released.

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Kyle Murray

Director, Financial Planning and Business Support

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## Appendix B: Ideas and Corresponding Vote Results

The following list outlines the results of the resident engagement process. Ideas are listed in order from most votes to least votes. The idea, description of the idea, followed by the location if applicable, and number of votes in brackets is included below.

### Short-Term Ideas

Short-term ideas are projects that can be completed within 1 to 2 years depending on seasonal constraints and COVID-19 impacts. Short-term ideas will require less resources to implement.

- Upgrade to tennis courts: resurface tennis courts with newly painted lines in Oakridge Optimist Park (119)
- Fitness Circuit: install an outdoor circuit of fitness equipment for free and accessible workout options in Oak Park (107)
- Beach Volleyball Court: addition of a beach volleyball court will allow people of all ages to play in a fun, free setting without having to pay or drive out of the community at Westdale Park (94)
- New Trees: plant additional trees throughout Oakridge neighbourhood (92)
- Indoor Roller-Skating Program: create opportunities for roller-skating during the season when ice is not present at Oakridge Arena (83)
- Basketball Court: install a full-size basketball court with two nets in Westdale Park (83)
- Street Tree Maintenance: provide streets with additional tree trimming and maintenance in Oakridge neighbourhood (77)
- Additional Shade Structure: add a second shelter structure similar to the existing shade structure to the other side of the spray pad in Oakridge Optimist Park (72)
- Community Garden: build a community garden for the local neighbourhood to grow fruits, vegetables, and flowers in Oakridge Optimist Park (67)
- Additional Benches: install additional benches across Oakridge neighbourhood parks (59)
- Art Festival: promote arts and culture by holding a festival showcasing art, music, and theatre in Oakridge Optimist Park and Oakridge Arena (58)
- Pedestrian Crossover: install a crossover with pavement markings and signage to increase ease and safety of crossing at Riverside Drive near St. Anthony Road, by the Alder Grove walkway (56)
- Outdoor Table Tennis: add an outdoor table tennis game that provides endless entertainment for people of all ages in Oakridge Neighbourhood (55)
- Repairs to Park Walkway: widen and level the current asphalt walkway in Oakridge Optimist park (54)
- Discover Oakridge Community Event: host community events like art festivals, music shows, and educational events like the ecological significance of the Sifton Bog and the Indigenous connections to Oakridge (47)
- Reading Garden with Little Library: create a reading garden with a free “leave a book, take a book” library in Oakridge Optimist Park (43)
- Low-Mobility High Back Swing: adding a high back swing will make the swing accessible for children of all abilities in Huntington Park (24)
- Additional Garbage Cans: increase supply of garbage cans to the park during spring, summer, and fall months in Oakridge Optimist Park (18)

### Long-Term Ideas

Long-term ideas are projects that will take longer than 2 years to complete and may be contingent on additional funding from other levels of government, securing a suitable location, construction approval processes and public engagement.

- Revitalization of Oakridge Arena or New Community Centre: build an addition on Oakridge Arena or create a separate community space for programming, storage of equipment, and community meetings and events at Oakridge Arena or alternate location (107)

- Outdoor Ice Rink on a Multi-Purpose Pad: install a multi-purpose concrete pad that could be used to create a neighbourhood-managed ice rink during the winter months in Oakridge Arena or Westdale Park (104)
- Pickleball Courts: replace one existing tennis court with two pickleball courts in Oakridge Optimist Park (71)
- Dog Park: create an off-leash dog park in Northwest London outside of Oakridge neighbourhood (25)
- Bandshell: installing a bandshell in the park will provide a smaller venue for concerts, movies, and picnics in Oakridge Optimist Park (25)
- Skateboard Park: install a neighbourhood skate park geared towards beginners and intermediate level skaters in Oak Park (24)
- Short Rock Climbing / Bouldering Wall: the approximately 8-foot high bouldering wall will help foster coordination, strength, confidence, and problem-solving among its users in Oakridge Optimist Park (18)
- Enhancements to Clara Brenton Woods: repair fencing, remove large trees blocking the path, clean up graffiti and make paths more accessible in Clara Brenton Woods (18)
- Sidewalk Improvements: improvements to better separate the sidewalk from the road along Riverside Drive to increase pedestrian safety at Riverside Drive near Palmtree Avenue and near St. Anthony Road (12)
- Lighting on Soccer Field: the addition of lighting to the soccer field would provide the community with many more hours of fun on the field in Oak Park (11)
- Improved Access to Clara Brenton Woods: build a safer, more ecological entrance in the form of a trail to replace previous staircase in Clara Brenton Woods (11)
- Pedestrian Signal Crossing: install a crossover with pavement markings, signs, pedestrian push buttons, and overhead lights to increase ease and safety of crossing Riverside Drive at Riverside and Warren Road (7)