

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: Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre and McMahan Park Engagement Results

Date: May 2, 2023

Recommendation

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

- a) The short-term project, multi use pad/outdoor ice rink, identified through resident engagement near the Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre Assessment Centre **BE ENDORSED**;
- b) The budget for the short-term project, multi use pad/outdoor ice rink on the current basketball court beside the community centre, **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 multi use pad/outdoor ice rink, 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 the Londoners who use the Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre (CHOCC) for hosting a COVID-19 Assessment Centre for over two years, Civic Administration undertook an engagement process to find out what residents would like to see as enhancements, activities, or events in and around the community centre and in McMahan Park. 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 a multi use pad/outdoor ice rink located on the current basketball court beside the community centre, while the long-term idea that received the most votes was a spray pad in McMahan Park.

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

- [Oakridge Resident Engagement Results \(March 29, 2022\)](#)

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 residents who use Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre and McMahan Park; and,
- provide the results of the engagement, including the recommended project to implement.

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Resident Engagement Process and Results

In response to Council's direction, a resident engagement process was launched in December 2022 after the Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre re-opened in early October of that year. The engagement promoted opportunities for residents who live in neighbourhoods near the Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre to share ideas of what they would like to see as enhancements, activities, or events as a thank you for hosting a COVID-19 Assessment Centre. The process was called "Friends of Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre Decide" and was modelled after the Neighbourhood Decision Making engagement process.

From December 2, 2022, to March 31, 2023, the Friends of Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre Decide engagement was implemented in two phases, focusing on residents within the geographical area from Huron Street to Adelaide Street North to Dundas Street to Highbury Avenue North. This boundary was developed based on Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre registered program participant information.

Phase I: Idea Submission

Residents were invited to share ideas for enhancements they would like to see in their neighbourhood between December 2, 2022, and January 31, 2023. 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.

Phase II: Vote on Top Ideas

Feasible ideas were added to a survey through which Friends of Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre could vote for their top ideas. Voting options included: online, over the phone, or in person from February 16 to March 31, 2023. All residents, regardless of their age were invited to vote.

A number of promotional tactics were used to reach residents, including:

- creation and promotion of a unique engagement webpage (getinvolved.london.ca/carling) that acted as a central location for all updates and engagement opportunities;
- in-person engagement at Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre;
- postcards mailed to houses in Carling and surrounding neighbourhoods;
- targeted social media promotion; and,
- emails to residents and community groups.

Participants were asked to choose up to three short-term ideas and one long-term idea. This resulted in a total of 1,303 short-term votes and 467 long-term votes.

Winning Ideas

Short-term

Short-term ideas were defined as projects that require less resources and can likely be completed within 2 years.

The short-term idea that received the most votes was a multi use pad/outdoor ice rink on the current basketball court beside the community centre. Residents were advised that the ice rink would operate under the Neighbourhood-Managed Ice Rink Program and be dependent on community volunteers to operate.

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 spray pad in McMahan Park. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan projects that five additional spray pads (for a total of 21) will be required by 2039.

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 new multi use pad/outdoor ice rink on the current basketball court beside the community centre is \$200,000. [Appendix A](#) outlines the source of financing, that subject to the approval of the recommendations in this report, will be used to establish a budget and capital project for this amount. 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 add a multi use pad/outdoor ice rink on the current basketball court beside the community centre within the next two years. Civic Administration will also explore other funding opportunities including potential provincial and federal funding for the long-term project, a spray pad in McMahan Park as they become available.

Conclusion

Carling and surrounding neighbourhood 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 multi use pad/outdoor ice rink on the current basketball court beside the community centre was well-received. The information gathered from residents about what they would like to see in their neighbourhood will be shared across Service Areas to help inform future planning.

Prepared by: Vanessa Kinsley, 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"

#23090
May 2, 2023
(Establish Budget)

Chair and Members
Community and Protective Services Committee

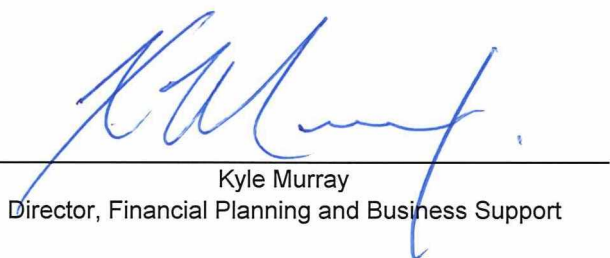
RE: Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre and McMahan Park Engagement Results
New Capital Project PK1102 - CHOCC Multi Use Pad

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:

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

Note 1: The additional requirement can be accommodated by a transfer from previously released pay-as-you-go funding. Pay-as-you-go funding is released during Mid-Year and Year-End Capital Budget Monitoring Reports when projects financed by pay-as-you-go funding are closed with a budget surplus.



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 were defined as projects that require less resources and can likely be completed within 2 years.

- Multi Use Pad/Outdoor Ice Rink: Multi use pad for road hockey, basketball, etc., in summer months and ice skating in winter months. (140)
- New Playground at McMahan Park: Accessible, upgraded playground with equipment for younger and older children. (137)
- Naturalization Planting Area: Expand the existing naturalized area by planting native species, installing bird houses and bat boxes, and doing invasive species management in the surrounding area. (117)
- Outdoor Fitness Equipment for Adults and Seniors: Installation of an outdoor circuit with approximately six fitness stations for free and accessible workout options. Pathways, added shade, safety surface and seating all included. (105)
- Outdoor Event Plaza: Create a plaza that can be used for theatre nights, concerts or other celebrations. (98)
- Summer Events (Location: Outside the community centre). (94)
- Café Lounge in Community Centre: A low-cost coffee lounge/area offering a spot for neighbours to meet or to host indoor music and art events. (91)
- Community Centre Change Room Renovation: Upgrade the lockers and change room areas in Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre. (88)
- Art in the Park: Free summer events featuring local artists and food vendors for the community. (84)
- Tree Planting (Location: Along the park corridor). (81)
- Shade for Picnics: Install a shade structure to protect people from the elements while enjoying picnics and other gatherings, placed on concrete with pathway for access. (64)
- Swings at Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre Playground: Accessible and belt swings in an expanded play circle next to the existing playground. (59)
- Upgrade the Outdoor Basketball Court: New acrylic surfacing and paint design for the outdoor basketball court. (58)
- Chess and Ping Pong Tables in McMahan Park: Installation of outdoor games tables with equipment stored at the community centre for community members to borrow. (54)
- Traffic Calming: Installation of speed cushions on the driveway/road into the community centre by the skate park and playground. (20)
- Pathway Railings: Increase the safety of the pedestrian pathways leading to the community centre from the east by adding railings on the decline. (13)

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.

- Spray Pad (Location: McMahan Park). (304)
- Lighting Along the Pathway (Location: Along the pathway between Elizabeth Street and the community centre). (163)