



Date: January 2, 2007

TO: Board Members – Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Park Improvement - Victoria Park

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. THAT the Board approve the attached conceptual design for Victoria Park as illustrated in this report. (Appendix 2)*
- B. THAT the Board reserve \$50,000 in the 2007 Capital Budget field house account for the upgrade of the washrooms in Victoria Park.*

POLICY

Conceptual designs are approved by the Board as part of the design process.

BACKGROUND

Victoria Park is a 0.9 hectare neighbourhood park in the Grandview/ Woodlands area, bounded by Victoria Drive in the east and Kitchener Street in the north. Existing park elements include mature perimeter trees, bocce courts, children's play equipment, an open grass area and washrooms. (Appendix 1)

Since 2003, staff have been working with a neighbourhood group advocating for improvements to Victoria Park. The Board approved funding for Victoria Park improvements in October 2005 as a part of the 2006–2008 Capital Plan.

DISCUSSION

As part of the public process, residents of the area were invited to provide input into the renewal of Victoria Park at an Open House held July 6th, 2006. This meeting was attended by 40 residents; 27 questionnaires were completed. The community asked the Park Board to consider various improvements as well as address several concerns.

Priorities included:

- Upgrades to the children's play area with all equipment located in one area
- New play equipment and the need for fencing
- Improved drainage in the park
- Permanent picnic tables
- Designing park elements to help discourage alcohol consumption
- Beautifying the space with plantings and entrance features
- Addressing the poor condition of the washrooms or consider their removal

- Improving bocce courts
- Adding pathways and lighting improvements

Park Board staff used the information to develop two conceptual plans that were presented at a subsequent Open House on October 25th, 2006. Of the 19 residents who provided comments, 74% preferred Concept A (appendix 2). The most significant difference between the two concepts was the location of the bocce courts. Concept A proposes the relocation of the courts to the east side of the park where as in Concept B the courts are shown close to their current location.

On December 5th, 2006, the Board's Planning Committee reviewed the preferred conceptual design. Members of the Victoria Park Neighbourhood group were in attendance to voice their support for the concept. The group has been involved, from the beginning, with design development as well as the organization of block parties and park clean ups. They have also worked with community police officers to help address some of the issues in the park, such as alcohol consumption. This supportive group has worked incredibly hard to help facilitate improvements to their neighbourhood. They have met with park staff on a regular basis and continue to be involved with the development of design details.

The upgrades featured in concept A include the relocation of the bocce courts to the east side of the park. The relocation will allow for an enlarged open area of grass for passive recreation. The courts will be built with improved drainage and will have several permanent picnic tables adjacent to them. Bocce court users have been involved with the process and are generally pleased with what is proposed. There was some concern in the community raised about the association of bocce courts and alcohol use in the park. Although this continues to be a concern, the community overwhelmingly supported the retention of the bocce facilities that have a 40 plus year history in Victoria Park. Throughout the design process, community police officers for the area have been involved and they are supportive of the proposed improvements.

The play equipment currently in several locations in the park will be replaced and consolidated to one location on the south side. The design of the children's play area will improve accessibility with the use of a variety of surfacing as well as the type of play structures. Low fencing, planting and benches will help define the children's area.

Paths will be added to improve the accessibility to the various elements in the park. The drainage will be upgraded where necessary to help address the excessively wet conditions in the winter months. Two of the park's main entrances will be highlighted with arbours as well as new plantings. Of the 67 existing mature trees in the park, all will remain with the exception of three that are to be removed due to declining health.

The existing washroom will be renovated to improve accessibility and address its overall poor condition. It is estimated the cost of the washroom upgrades will be approximately \$50,000. Funding for the washroom improvements are recommended to be provided from the facilities side of the 2006 -2008 Capital Plan.

BUDGET

The park has been designed by staff with a construction budget of \$575,000, plus an additional \$50,000 for washroom improvements. The total budget for all park improvements is \$625,000.

SCHEDULE

The timing of the project is:

Contract drawings and documents	January – March 2007
Tender	March 2007
Board award	April 2007
Construction	June – August 2007

SUMMARY

The proposed upgrades will provide needed improvements to Victoria Park. Approval of the conceptual plan will allow Park staff to proceed with the detailed designs and construction drawings with a view to installing the upgrade this summer.

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