



October 29, 2019

**Memo To:** Capital Sustainability Steering Committee

**From:** Paolo Masaro, Director of Infrastructure Delivery Services

**Subject:** Follow-up Recommendations for Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory

On February 25, 2019, Council approved the Committee of the Whole recommendation to establish a Capital Sustainability Steering Committee (the Committee). The mandate of the Committee is to evaluate opportunities to deliver long-term capital investments that are in line with community expectations and fiscal sustainability.

A presentation on the sustainability of the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory (RHDDO) was brought to the Committee September 24, 2019 summarizing how the City intends to implement the vision outlined in the RHDDO Master Plan, as well as the cost impacts associated with this plan. Four alternatives were presented aimed at addressing concerns regarding the financial sustainability of the sourced reserves. The outcomes of the recommended strategies would provide specific actions towards financial sustainability in the future.

The general consensus of the Committee in relation to the RHDDO was:

- 1) That Option 2 which extends the timeframe for the implementation of the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Early Priorities was favoured as a sustainable approach to delivery;
- 2) That the 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue entrance improvements to Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory be advanced and considered as part of the Early Priorities.

The following sections outline background information related to items 1 and 2 above.

### **1. Extend Timeframe for the Implementation of the RHDDO Early Priorities (Option 2)**

The RHDDO Park Master Plan is a visionary plan that highlights the cultural heritage of the buildings and landscape and will contribute to the City's identity. The Master Plan recommends implementation of individual components of the plan within three priority groups. Each of the three priority groups (Early Priority, Medium Priority and Late Priority) includes specific projects to be implemented over the planned horizon.

In view of the considerable capital funding required to implement the master plan the RHDDO Staff Steering Committee undertook to prioritize projects within each group. The Staff Steering



Committee identified that 'Early Priorities' projects were essential in establishing the RHDDO as a working and accessible park to all residents.

The identified funding sources for RHDDO projects are the Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Reserve Fund (92%) and the Outdoor Recreation Development Charges Reserve Fund (8%). Implementing the Early Priorities and future phases of the RHDDO Master Plan may have a significant impact on the sustainability of these reserves. The passage of final regulations supporting Bill 108, *More Homes, More Choice Act 2019* will provide staff with a greater sense of the opportunities and constraints in this regard.

In recognition of this potential financial impact and the overall cost to deliver the project, four alternatives were explored and presented to the Committee for consideration:

- Option 1 – Continue Early Priorities as Planned
- Option 2 – Extend Timeframe for Implementation of Early Priorities
- Option 3 – Maintain Passive Park Indefinitely following the Completion of the Early Priorities
- Option 4 – Temporary Deferral of all RHDDO Master Plan work.

The general consensus was Option 2 as it extends the timeframe for implementation of the RHDDO Early Priorities. This option achieves the vision of the Master Plan Early Priorities over a longer timeframe and results in a smoothing of the yearly capital budget expenditures.

## **2. Advance the 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue entrance to Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory**

The Committee recommended that the 16th Avenue Entrance (designated as primary entrance to the park) improvements be advanced to become an Early Priority project given that all other RHDDO entrances were already part of the Early Priorities.

Entrance features provide clearly defined access points which convey park image, identity and a sense of arrival to the RHDDO Park.