



## **Capital Sustainability Steering Committee**

### **Minutes**

**CSSC#04-24**

**Tuesday, May 7, 2024, 1:30 p.m.**

**Council Chambers**

**225 East Beaver Creek Road**

**Richmond Hill, Ontario**

A Capital Sustainability Steering Committee meeting of the Council of the City of Richmond Hill was held on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 1:30 p.m. in Council Chambers via videoconference.

Committee Members present in Council Chambers:

Mayor West (Chair)  
Regional and Local Councillor Chan  
Regional and Local Councillor DiPaola (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Davidson

Committee Member present via videoconference:

Councillor Cilevitz

Council Member also in attendance in Council Chambers:

Councillor Thompson

Council Member also in attendance via videoconference:

Councillor Shiu

Staff Members present in Council Chambers:

D. Joslin, City Manager  
S. Adams, Commissioner of Corporate and Financial Services  
G. Galanis, Acting Commissioner of Planning and Building Services  
P. Masaro, Commissioner of Infrastructure and Engineering Services  
T. Steele, Commissioner of Community Services  
M. Flores, Director, Policy Planning  
B. Levesque, Director, Infrastructure Delivery  
G. Li, Director, Financial Services and Treasurer  
M. Dobbie, Manager, Park and Natural Heritage Planning  
M. Kashani, Manager, Design and Construction

S. Huycke, City Clerk  
R. Ban, Deputy City Clerk  
S. Dumont, Council/Committee Coordinator  
C. Connolly, Legislative Services Assistant

Staff Members present via videoconference:

S. Tsenis, Manager, Corporate Asset Management  
I. Treiger, Financial Management Advisor

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

Moved by: Councillor Davidson

That the agenda be adopted as distributed by the Clerk.

Carried

**3. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest by Members of Council under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

**4. Adoption of Previous Minutes**

**4.1 Minutes - Capital Sustainability Steering Committee meeting  
CSSC#03-24 held April 16, 2024**

Moved by: Councillor Davidson

a) That the minutes of Capital Sustainability Steering Committee meeting CSSC#03-24 held April 16, 2024 be adopted.

Carried

**5. Delegation(s)**

There were no delegations.

**6. Scheduled Business**

**6.1 SRPBS.24.054 – Parks Plan Implementation and 10 Year Capital  
Forecast for Growth**

- **Presentation by Gigi Li, Director, Financial Services and Treasurer, and Michelle Dobbie, Manager, Park and Natural Heritage Planning**

Gigi Li, Director, Financial Services and Treasurer provided opening remarks by outlining the purpose of today's Capital Sustainability Steering Committee meeting and reviewed the planned Committee meetings remaining in 2024.

Michelle Dobbie, Manager, Park and Natural Heritage Planning, reviewed the 2022 Parks Plan, the 2025 to 2033 Capital Forecast for new growth parks and park revitalization projects, and funding sources for growth related projects. She reviewed funding challenges and the risks the City needed to consider to mitigate the various challenges in delivering growth related parks and park revitalization projects. M. Dobbie provided an overview of four mitigating scenarios to address the funding challenges that have largely resulted from Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, and invited Committee members to provide their input.

G. Li reviewed the Financial Sustainability Strategy, and provided an overview of debt financing, including what the *Municipal Act, 2001* allowed, types and benefits of debt financing, and the associated challenges and risks. She reviewed what was appropriate for debt financing, provided Richmond Hill context, and concluded by reviewing next steps.

Committee members discussed the mitigating scenarios to address the funding challenges affecting the City's ability to deliver new growth parks and park revitalization projects, with concerns expressed regarding maintaining the status quo under Scenario A.

Committee members shared their opinions on "Scenario B – Defer portions of projects and extend time frames". They questioned when the North Leslie Community Centre (NLCC) would be needed given the construction timeline, the expectation of residents that move in, and it was suggested that neighbouring community centres could service those residents in the interim. Concerns were expressed with deferring the NLCC and the David Dunlop Observatory Park, with comments suggesting that staff consider phasing and extending timelines in a reasonable manner. The implications of cost inflation was also discussed as a risk associated with deferral.

With respect to “Scenario C – Utilize reserve funds or alternative funding”, remarks were made regarding the importance of securing land for future development of parks, and whether enough land would become available in the future to meet the requirements within the Parks Plan. Questions were brought forward on the amount of reserve funds available, and what other alternative funding sources could be considered to fund growth-related park and recreation projects.

Committee members discussed “Scenario D – Adjust scope and scale of new growth park/park revitalization projects and NLCC”, and opinions expressed that this measure would allow the City to operate within its means. Committee members expressed their opinion that the City take measures to avoid adversely affecting the North Leslie community. Inquiries arose about the plans for the West Gormley neighborhood, with comments suggesting that careful thought be given to the amenities offered, considering its proximity to other community centers.

Committee members voiced their opinions on debt financing, expressing concerns about future interest rates and the resulting repayment burden on taxpayers. They raised questions and provided feedback on internal borrowing, and inquired whether options such as borrowing from the Canada Infrastructure Bank or Infrastructure Canada had been explored and if their rates were more competitive than commercial banks. There were suggestions that other revenue opportunities be explored, and that Richmond Hill lands be sold to generate funds as a means to defer the need for debt financing. Committee members also questioned the actions taken by other municipalities to address the funding challenges with a suggestion that there was an opportunity for significant advocacy.

There was discussion on the need for a civic square, its benefits, how it can be delivered in a financially responsible manner, and it was suggested that staff explore other ways to service the community without large investment.

Committee members remarked on the need to examine Richmond Hill’s entire parks portfolio, and that parks offer a range of recreational opportunities and are accessible. They suggested prioritizing efforts to enhance park enjoyment to attract more residents to the city’s parks, while also considering park usage and demand in determining spending priorities.

Moved by: Regional and Local Councillor DiPaola

a) That the presentation by Gigi Li, Director, Financial Services and Treasurer, and Michelle Dobbie, Manager, Park and Natural Heritage Planning, regarding Parks Plan Implementation and 10 Year Capital Forecast for Growth, be received with thanks; and

b) That staff report SRPBS.24.054 regarding the Parks Plan Implementation and 10 Year Capital Forecast for growth-related park projects be received and that all comments be referred back to staff for consideration in 2025 capital planning.

Carried

**7. Adjournment**

Moved by: Regional and Local Councillor Chan

That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.