



Joe Cressy 周凱捷

City Councillor | Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina

June 13, 2016

Government Management Committee
100 Queen Street West, Toronto City Hall
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Dear Chair and Members,

Re: Acquisition of Land for Parkland Purposes in King Spadina Area

King Spadina is an area of the City that has experienced extraordinary growth since the adoption of new Secondary Plan policies in April 1996. The population grew from 945 people in 1996 to 8,645 people in 2011; based on proposed, approved, and completed development applications, as well as projects and buildings under construction, it has the potential to increase to 40,000 people. Employment has also grown in the area from 24,992 employees in 2001 to 35,373 employees in 2011; based on proposed, approved, and completed development applications and buildings under construction, it has the potential to increase to 57,000 employees.

One of the challenges in managing this level of growth in this small area of the downtown is providing the services, both hard and soft, that are needed to serve the population. The lack of community facilities and local parkland will continue to be a serious challenge to the economic vitality, social health, and liveability of the area. In October 2015, City Council approved our plan for a partnership between the City of Toronto and the YMCA to bring a new YMCA Centre to the Revitalization of the City-owned Waterworks building at 505 Richmond Street West. This partnership demonstrates a real step in building a liveable community in the continually growing area.

However, new parkland in the King-Spadina neighbourhood remains a significant gap as we work to catch up with the dramatic growth of the last number of years. The current local parkland provision rate of the King-Spadina East Precinct (the area between Spadina Avenue and Simcoe Street) is 0 to 0.42 ha per 1,000 population, which is the lowest quintile of the five levels measured in the City for Local Parkland Assessment Cells. The City commissioned a Community Services and Facilities study in 2013 and it was found that the King-Spadina area was already deficient in new parkland – and with the further anticipated growth that has continued, the area would continue to become parkland deficient.

The King Spadina area has little existing parkland available, and what is available is intensely used. The most critical need for new parkland is in the East Precinct. A park as centrally located as possible in this area would provide the best level of access to the highest concentration of users.

The City is taking steps to provide more open space in King Spadina by requiring on-site parkland dedication on larger sites or in the form of privately-owned publicly accessible spaces (POPS). However this will not be enough to serve the needs of the area. To help address parkland demand, it will be necessary for the City to spend funds secured through Section 42 of the *Planning Act* in order to purchase new parkland accessible to the burgeoning population. Because sites tend to be small, it is difficult to require on-site parkland and achieve meaningful, functional parks with broader utility other than very small parks for sitting or for small gatherings.

In 2014, City Council requested the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to identify potential new parkland and proceed with on-site parkland dedications, off- site dedications and parkland acquisition in the East Precinct of King-Spadina on a priority basis. The link to the report can be found at: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.TE34.92>

Working together with my office, Real Estate Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and City Planning staff have identified a potential site for parkland acquisition in King-Spadina (the "Subject Property"). Real Estate Services staff are beginning the process of discussing the possible acquisition of the Subject Property with the owner, and will determine the owner's willingness to enter into a negotiated agreement to sell the Subject Property to the City.

Depending on the outcome of those discussions, the City may want to consider other options it has available to pursue the acquisition of the Subject Property and can report out on those options.

Given the pace of development in King-Spadina, there is a real possibility that a development application could be submitted for the Subject Property during the time of the Summer Recess. In the event the owner decides to submit a development application for the Subject Property or sells it to a third party for redevelopment, it would help to have the parties on notice of the City's interest in the site.

In order to secure the Subject Property for parkland purposes, Parks Forestry & Recreation (i) supports Real Estate Services continuing discussions with the owner to purchase the Subject Property; and (ii) concurrently requests that Real Estate Services report on available options to acquire the Subject Property.

I therefore request that:

The Government Management Committee direct Real Estate Services Staff to report directly to the July 12, 2016 meeting of City Council with a staff report on options to acquire the Subject Property.

Sincerely,



Joe Cressy
City Councillor
Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina