

Council Memo



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, May 25, 2020
Subject	Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan: Open Space System Strategy – Re: Letter from Miller Thomson LLP on behalf of Thomasfield Homes

The City Clerk's Office received a letter regarding the Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan: Open Space System Strategy dated May 6, 2020 from Trenton Johnson of Miller Thomson LLP on behalf of Thomasfield Homes Limited. This memo provides staff's response including additional information and clarification of points raised in the letter.

Request and Staff's Recommendation

Mr. Johnson has requested that Council refer the location of the community park back to staff and that staff hold meetings with the landowners to attempt to achieve consensus with respect to the Community Park Location.

Staff do not recommend that Council refer the matter back to staff as there has been extensive consultation with the public, stakeholders and landowners throughout the development of the secondary plan to date and specifically through the engagement on the open space system strategy as directed by Council in May 2019. Over the course of the engagement held in Q3 and Q4 2019, it became clear that there were differing opinions and that consensus on a location would not be reached (see pages 3-5 of report IDE-2020-17 for details regarding community engagement). Also, there is no indication that there is willingness on the part of the other landowners within the secondary plan area to participate in the process requested by Miller Thomson. From the earlier stages of the CMSP engagement process, City staff have recommended to the landowners that they form a group to establish consensus on a variety of matters related to the CMPS but there was no apparent interest.

The need for a community park in the secondary plan

At this time it is estimated that approximately 16,000 future residents will be accommodated within the secondary plan area. Based on the number of new residents and the existing amount of parkland within the City, additional community park space needs to be planned for within the secondary plan area.

The park service levels within the City's Official Plan identify that a community park is required within the secondary plan area. As the city population grows, in particular as the population grows within the Clair-Maltby area, the service levels

identified within the City's Official Plan need to be maintained to ensure equitable distribution of park assets throughout the city. 16,000 new residents will create demand for large scale park amenities in addition to a network of smaller, walkable neighbourhood parks. This is further reinforced through the community engagement work that concluded that one larger community park is preferable to two smaller community parks.

The proposed community park in Clair-Maltby is intended to provide both active and passive recreation opportunities for the community and may provide an opportunity for additional sportfields as well as outdoor event space. The size and location have been evaluated and at a conceptual level can meet the community programming expectations.

The community has expressed particular interest in ensuring that parks, including the community park, are provisioned within the Clair Maltby Secondary Plan as outlined by the City's Official Plan service levels.

Expansion of the existing South End Community Park

For clarification we note that while the letter refers to the existing park as the 'Larry Pearson Community Park', it is the South End Community Park and 'Larry Pearson' only refers to the baseball diamonds within the park.

The Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Plan 2009 was a ten-year plan for the city and addressed needs for the City's population to 2019. Most of the lands within the Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan area are identified as 'Reserve Lands' and were not intended to be planned or available for development until 2021 or beyond. The 2009 Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Plan did not plan for the City's parkland needs beyond 2019, therefore did not address or consider lands within or parkland needs for the Clair-Maltby secondary plan area.

For further clarification, the letter specifically references the South End Centre Component Study (as part of the 2009 Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Master Plan). The development of the South End Community Centre is intended to occur within the existing South End Community Park boundaries. The 2009 South End Component Study does reference purchasing additional land to accommodate design considerations for the Community Centre. This is noted as a second option 'if there is insufficient land to accommodate all components proposed for the South End Centre' (page 125). The expansion of the park is not necessary to facilitate the South End Centre.

In addition, since 2009, the City's Natural Heritage System (NHS) was approved. The South End Community Park is now almost entirely surrounded by Significant Natural Areas, therefore the opportunity to explore a substantial expansion to this park is no longer a feasible option.

Size of the Community Park

Report IDE-2020-17 outlines why a ten-hectare community park is being recommended. Generally, in order for the community park to accommodate multiple functions, including both passive and active uses, while largely maintaining the existing topography as part of the function of the park, ten-hectares is an appropriate size to achieve these goals.

Further pausing the Clair-Maltby Open Space System Strategy

Project Timeline Implications

Should Council decide to refer the Open Space System Strategy to staff for further discussions, the timing for completion of the Clair-Maltby Secondary would be impacted.

Early in the project, council expressed a desire for the secondary plan to be expedited to the extent possible. Staff worked with the project consultant team and modified the timeline to reduce it from four years to approximately three years while still undertaking the scope of work outlined in the project terms of reference.

This expedited project timeline had anticipated the secondary plan being completed in April 2019.

On June 25, 2018, Council directed that staff present the findings of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Characterization Report at a public focus group session before starting commencement of the Phase 3 tasks. This direction resulted in the project timeline being lengthened.

In May of 2019, the revised timeline for the project outlined that it would be complete in Q1 2020. However, on May 13, 2019 Council directed that staff further review the location and size of the potential community park and bring back the Open Space System Strategy for consideration prior to the draft secondary plan and Master Environmental Servicing Plan.

Undertaking the Open Space System Strategy process included an extensive amount of in-person and online community engagement for all interested stakeholders including landowners (see pages 3-5 of report IDE-2020-17 for further details). The process has lengthened the project timeline and it is now anticipated that the project will not be complete until Q1 of 2021. We do note that this revised timeline may further change as a result of COVID-19 impacts.

Should Council refer the Open Space System Strategy back to staff for a second time, the project timelines will be further impacted. The project is at a point where other work, including detailed modelling, cannot proceed until direction regarding the Open Space System Strategy, including the location of the community park, is endorsed by Council.

Potential Financial Implications

In order to “attempt to reach consensus with respect to a Community Park location that meets the City’s criteria to be brought back to Council for consideration” as has been requested, we recommend that the process be led by a professional facilitator, mediator or equivalent. Financial impacts would result from the hiring of a professional to guide the process.

If the Open Space System Strategy is further paused and the landowners are directed to lead their own process, staff does not anticipate that there would be a direct financial cost to the project. The components of the secondary plan project that rely on a decision on the location of the park would be paused.

Staff's Comments on the request for a referral

As previously stated, staff do not recommend that Council refer the location of the Community Park for further discussions with landowners. An extensive consultation process was undertaken which resulted in many different opinions being expressed with no clear agreement on location. If Council refers the matter back for further consideration, staff recommend that the process be landowner driven and that staff not be involved in the meetings.

We recommend that the landowners be provided with an 8 week period to hold their conversations, reach consensus and report back to the General Manager of Planning and Building Services (or alternate) and the General Manager of Parks and Recreation on or before July 24, 2020. Staff would then be in a position to report back to Council the results of the landowner discussions in September 2020.

This memo was approved by:

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