



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Recreation Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 12, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Gage Park Family Skills Pump Track - Pilot Project (CES16012(a)) (Ward 3)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 3
PREPARED BY:	Sarah Cellini (905) 546-2424 ext. 3859
SUBMITTED BY:	Vicki Woodcox Acting General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Gage Park Family Skills Pump Track remain as a permanent amenity in its current location; and,
- (b) That operational funding to maintain the amenity in the amount of \$20,000 be added to the 2018 base operation budget for the Public Works Department.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Hamilton constructed a Family Skills Bike Park (pump track) in Gage Park in the summer of 2015. The initiative was proposed by the Crown Point Youth Council and was moved forward after a presentation was made by the Youth Council at Public Works Committee in June 2015 (Report PW14066). Funding for the project was approved through the Capital Budget process. The purpose of the two-year pilot project was to monitor and evaluate the suitability of the Gage Park location and the bike park amenity through a comprehensive monitoring plan as well as evaluate the need for a permanent bike park amenity in Hamilton. The pilot project supports that the need for a bike park amenity in the City of Hamilton has been met and satisfied at the Gage Park location.

The operational funding request will enable the City staff to continue with weekly inspections of the bike park during the bike park season (approximately May to October, weather permitting) as well as to perform weekly maintenance.

Volunteers are encouraged to assist City staff with maintenance of the pump track by participating in weekly maintenance days. Additionally, the general public is encouraged to contact the City when a maintenance issue is discovered. When the pump track is

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

closed for the season, a sign is installed indicating that the amenity is closed and not being maintained.

A review of existing and planned outdoor, municipally owned bike parks identified that the majority have a provision rate of one facility per city. It is important to note that many municipalities offer multi-use facilities that accommodate a variety of users, instead of providing single user amenities. Future bike park needs should be evaluated by staff using the established criteria for the Gage Park Family Skills Bike Park (Appendix "A" to Report CES16012(a)) prior to allocating capital and operating budgets for bike park amenities).

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 6

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: An increase in the annual Public Works Department operating budget of \$20,000 is required to continue to maintain and operate the Gage Park amenity.

Staffing: Additional staffing is not required to administer the existing Gage Park Family Skills Bike Park under the current structure.

Legal: There are no legal implications associated with Report CES16012(a).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At Public Works Committee on April 22, 2014, a presentation was made by the Crown Point Youth Council requesting a pump track in Gage Park. Council subsequently approved the following motion:

“Staff be directed to report to the Public Works Committee with options and alternatives respecting the establishment of a Family Bike Skills Park.”

On June 16, 2014, City staff presented an Information Report (PW14066) to the Public Works Committee, which identified that the proposed pump track amenity had policy support from the Outdoor Recreation Facilities and Sports Field Plan (2011). Recreation supported the Gage Park location as a pilot project, to be verified as suitable to best practices and existing site conditions. As there were no pump track facilities within the City, there were no approved standards and criteria to guide facility placement, design and construction.

Recreation staff assessed the demographic, locational and financial requirements associated with the provision and design of a pump track bike facility. This information was used to develop the pilot project criteria based on best practices and public engagement.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy or legislative implications.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

- Corporate Services: Risk Management
- Public Works: Landscape Architectural Services, Parks and Cemeteries and Transportation Management
- Community and Emergency Services: Neighbourhood Action Strategy
- Public Health: Healthy Living Division
- Planning and Economic Development: Municipal Law Enforcement
- Hamilton Police Services

All of the above have provided guidance and advice on the pilot project and their comments have been incorporated into this report.

Public consultation during pump track design, implementation and monitoring was integral to the success of the pump track pilot project.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Public Support for a Bike Amenity

The Crown Point Youth Council championed the need for a bike amenity in Hamilton and was supported by the bike community and residents. After one and a half seasons of usage, support for the pump track has been positive, with suggestions for adding features to the pump track to establish a bike park and further promote bike skill development.

Policy Direction for a Bike Amenity

The City's Outdoor Recreation Facilities and Sports Fields Provision Plan (Outdoor Study) of 2011 supported the Crown Point Youth Council's request for a bike amenity in Hamilton.

“Identify an appropriate site for a freestyle bike park (dirt) and seek community partners for its development, administration and operation. This facility would serve as a pilot project and its long-term viability would be conditional upon its successful short-term operation and community support. Future projects and demand would be evaluated based on the pilot project.”

City staff developed evaluation criteria presented in 2014 which have proven to be successful in locating the pump track in a City Wide Park with access to washrooms, full

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

time City staff, parking, access to bus and bike routes and complements that section of Gage Park with an active and free recreational amenity.

Other Municipalities offering Bike Park Amenities

A review of 10 Ontario municipalities was completed to understand how Hamilton's bike amenity compared in terms of provision rates for bike amenities/parks, maintenance and programming offerings. Specific data of the summarized information below is attached as Appendix "B" to Report CES16012(a). Although every city operates under different social, economic and environmental considerations, there is some benefit to comparing provision rates to understand how Hamilton compares to other municipalities offering bike amenities.

Existing Bike Park Provision Rates

A survey of municipally owned, outdoor, dirt material bike parks/bike features was completed to understand what standards exist for providing pump tracks by total population (i.e. provision rates). The municipalities surveyed do not have provision rates, rather most municipally-built bike parks were constructed through capital budgets, with some municipalities receiving support from local bike shops, public and/or corporate donations (i.e. construction companies provided dirt, labour).

Maintenance of Bike Amenities

Most municipalities surveyed maintained their own dirt bike parks or maintain the pump track with the help of volunteers. There are some municipalities that have agreements with community groups/organizations that permit maintenance activities to be completed by the community group/organization (i.e. City of Ottawa, Burlington). However, it is unclear what conditions are contained in the agreements in terms of the community group/organizational expectations to provide insurance, etc.

Locational Criteria for Bike Amenities

None of the municipalities surveyed have formal locational criteria to determine appropriate locations for bike parks.

Bike Park Size and Design Standards

With respect to size and design of bike parks, there is no typical standard; each municipality designs their bike parks (offering a variety of progression/skill levels with a variety of clay, wood and rock materials) depending on available funding, location/park size, consultations with design experts/consultants and the community.

Pump Track Pilot Project Monitoring

In order to determine the success of the pump track pilot project, a monitoring plan was developed by City staff. The monitoring plan addressed and measured information

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

pertaining to the use of the pump track. Five theme areas were identified as key indicators to be monitored and are noted below:

- Maintenance Indicator: Two major repairs were made to surface material due to wear between August and October, 2016. Some areas have been observed to collect water, which will require repair before the 2017 opening. Otherwise no increase in maintenance calls for debris, graffiti or signage at or around the pump track.
- Safety Indicator: No claims for bodily harm and no increase in crime reported to the City.
- User Satisfaction Indicator: 77% satisfaction rate for participants of online and on-site survey.
- Usage Indicator: Over 100 revolutions on average for weekend total use.
- Gage Park Stakeholder Engagement Indicator: No stakeholders responded with concerns.
- Community Issues Indicator: No increase in unlawful parking reported.

The monitoring plan identified positive outcomes for each of the performance indicators and will assist with the evaluation and review of future sites and expansions.

Liability Implications of Bike Parks

As the sport of mountain biking/BMX becomes increasingly mainstream, municipalities that operate bike parks must give careful consideration to risk management. In 2008, an adult cyclist suffered an injury while at the Bike Park in Bruce County, Ontario. After attempting an obstacle called the “Free Fall” (i.e. teeter totter feature), the cyclist fell and broke his neck. The 2016 decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal in the case of Campbell v. Bruce County, a municipality that operated a mountain biking adventure park (the “Bike Park”) was found liable, as occupier, for the accident that rendered the cyclist a quadriplegic. Many municipalities considering the establishment of a bike park amenity are using the Bruce County court decision to evaluate and mitigate the risks associated with the amenity. The recent decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal provides guidance to municipalities to limit their liability with respect to the design, operation and maintenance of a bike park project.

Potential Impacts of Court Decision for Future Bike Parks/Amenities

Municipalities are responsible for adequately warning users of the danger they will be encountering on amenities that involve an element of physical challenge and risk. To

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

that end, municipalities must consider the dangers associated with the features of its amenities, the specific wording of its signage, and its system for keeping track of accidents and incidents.

When evaluating the City of Hamilton's pump track amenity against the Court decision, it can be seen that the City of Hamilton has endeavoured to provide a safe environment for users through the design, construction, maintenance and monitoring of the pump track pilot project.

Future Bike Parks in Hamilton

Although the pump track at Gage Park satisfies the need for a bike amenity in Hamilton, requests for additional features at the existing site, as well as the construction of additional bike parks have been received by staff from residents, the participants of the user survey and City Councillors. Keeping in mind existing budget constraints and future financial pressures anticipated for future budgets, staff acknowledge the popularity of the amenity and suggest that future requests for bike parks be accompanied by a submission of available funding prior to an evaluation/feasibility study by City staff. The request will be evaluated using the locational criteria established through the pilot project, which will include costs associated with capital and operating of the requested amenity to understand true costs and to determine if the amount of funding is sufficient for the requested amenity.

There are other creative opportunities to accommodate bike users with similar sport users such as scooter and skateboarder participants that have received success in other municipalities such as Burlington, Guelph and St. Catharines. Multi-user amenities may be an option for Council's consideration for potential cost savings on construction and maintenance while serving multiple users.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

A possible alternative is to remove the amenity and re-sod the area for passive recreation use. This alternative does not satisfy the recreational need, nor does it contribute to free, active recreational opportunities within the neighbourhood.

Financial Implications: The cost to remove the pump track is approximately \$15,000 - \$20,000.

Staffing Implications: There are no staffing implications associated with this alternative.

Legal Implications: There are no legal implications associated with this alternative.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement & Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES16012(a): Locational Criteria to establish Bike Amenity

Appendix B to Report CES16012(a): Monitoring Plan

Appendix C to Report CES16012(a): Review of Municipalities offering Bike Amenities

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.