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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 25, 2009
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 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: April 7, 2009

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Parks and Recreation and Director of Planning

SUBJECT: Pigeon Park Renovation and Hastings Street Sidewalk Reconstruction:
Funding Request

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council allocate \$187,500 from the International Village Community Amenity Contribution Reserve to fund the renovation of Pigeon Park.
- B. THAT Council allocate \$25,000 from the 2004 Downtown Eastside Revitalization - Public Realm Improvements Capital Budget to fund the reconstruction of the sidewalk along Hastings Street adjacent to Pigeon Park.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Parks and Recreation recommends approval of A, and the Director of Planning recommends approval of B.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of A and B.

COUNCIL POLICY

Allocation of Community Amenity Contributions requires Council approval.

SUMMARY

Pigeon Park, located at Hastings and Carrall Streets, is a popular sitting and resting spot for residents living in low-income housing in the Downtown Eastside. The park was last renovated in the 1970s, and many of the park's physical elements are in need of being replaced. On March 2, 2009, the Park Board approved a 'concept plan' to renovate Pigeon Park. The park is scheduled to be renovated in the summer of 2009.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to allocate \$187,500 from the International Village Community Amenity Contribution Reserve to fund the renovation of Pigeon Park, and \$25,000 from the 2004 Downtown Eastside Revitalization - Public Realm Improvements Capital Budget to fund the reconstruction of the sidewalk along Hastings Street adjacent to Pigeon Park.

BACKGROUND

The City and Park Board have made a number of significant investments in upgrading parks in the Downtown Eastside over the last decade, including renovations at:

- Wendy Poole Park (Main and Alexander Streets) in 1999,
- Thornton Park (Main Street and Terminal Avenue) in 2002, and
- Victory Square (Cambie and Hastings Streets) in 2002-2003.

Two additional park renovation projects are scheduled for 2009:

- Oppenheimer Park (Dunlevy Avenue and Cordova Street), and
- Pigeon Park (Carrall and Hastings Street).

Another major investment in the public realm has been the construction of the Carrall Street Greenway. Three blocks (Hastings Street to Expo Boulevard) have been completed. The block between Water and Cordova Streets is currently under construction, and the block adjacent to Pigeon Park (Cordova to Hastings Streets) will be constructed this summer.

DISCUSSION

Pigeon Park, sometimes called Pioneer Place, is a 3,000 square foot (0.03 hectare) triangular plaza located at the northwest corner of Hastings and Carrall Streets. Although it is located on a busy arterial street and the park's surface is concrete, Pigeon Park has a pleasant green ambiance from spring to fall due to a canopy of tall deciduous trees. There are six well-utilized benches in the park, as well as a drinking fountain.



Pigeon Park was last renovated in the 1970s, and many of the park's physical elements (base surface and park furniture) are in need of being replaced or restored. The process to renovate the park started in 2004 when the Environmental Youth Alliance was hired to conduct one-on-one consultations with park users regarding possible improvements, with more than 100 residents participating. Building on this community feedback, three principles were developed to guide future improvements at Pigeon Park:

1. Preserve features that make the park popular with the community;
2. Replace/restore aging features in the park; and
3. Add new features to the park.

A draft 'concept plan' for park improvements was generated in 2005 and circulated for public comment in 2005 and 2006. A revised 'concept plan' was prepared in early 2009 and approved by the Park Board on March 2, 2009 (see plan below, which includes the design for the Carrall Street Greenway, approved by Council on April 28, 2005).



To ensure that the sidewalks surrounding Pigeon Park have a consistent appearance, it is recommended that sidewalk improvements be made on Hastings Street similar to those already scheduled for Carrall Street as part of the Carrall Street Greenway construction. This work will include new concrete sidewalk and an extension of the decorative rails marking the CPR right-of-way that will be included on the Greenway and in Pigeon Park.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding source that has been identified for renovating Pigeon Park is the International Village Community Amenity Contribution Reserve. In 1995, as part of a rezoning of the lands at International Village (roughly bounded by Pender, Taylor, Pacific, Dunsmuir and Beatty Streets), Council accepted a future payment of \$1.5 million (plus an inflationary increase) from the land owner to be allocated to "development of parks to serve this general area of the city".

The payment was received in 2004 and totaled \$1,715,868 (\$1.5 million plus \$215,868 as an inflationary increase). The majority of these funds have already been allocated by Council. The uncommitted balance currently stands at \$187,500. Park Board staff estimate that implementing the approved 'concept plan' for Pigeon Park can be accommodated within this funding envelope.

On March 2, 2009, the Park Board approved: "THAT the Board request that Council allocate \$187,500 from the International Village Community Amenity Contribution Reserve to fund the improvements at Pigeon Park".

The reconstruction of the sidewalk along Carrall Street adjacent to Pigeon Park is included in the Carrall Street Greenway project.

The reconstruction of the sidewalk along Hastings Street adjacent to Pigeon Park will cost approximately \$25,000. Funding source for this work is the 2004 Downtown Eastside Revitalization - Public Realm Improvements Capital Budget, administered by the Planning Department.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The renovation of Pigeon Park is scheduled for the summer of 2009. This timing would match the construction timetable for the Carrall Street Greenway. The 300 block of Carrall Street (Hastings to Cordova Street, adjacent to Pigeon Park) is scheduled to be constructed in the spring/summer of 2009, and reconstruction of the Hastings Street sidewalk will be coordinated with this work. Staff believe that disruption to park users and others in the community would be minimized if these projects were constructed simultaneously, as opposed to sequentially.

CONCLUSION

Pigeon Park is an important and popular sitting/resting spot for many residents of the Downtown Eastside. The proposed renovations will refresh and enhance the park while maintaining its role as a vital public place in this community.