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Mulock Property Final Draft Master Plan Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2021-29

Department(s): Development & Infrastructure Services

Author(s): Peter Noehammer

Meeting Date: April 20, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Mulock Property Final Draft Master Plan, dated April 20, 2021 be received; and,
2. That the Master Plan as proposed in the attached report titled, "Mulock Property Master Plan Phase II" by PLANT Architect Inc. be endorsed as the basis for further implementation of features and development of the Mulock Property; and,
3. That Staff be authorized to proceed with the next steps toward implementation of the Master Plan being the retention of project management services and appropriate consulting services to undertake detailed design leading to phased construction of the planned elements; and,
4. That Staff be authorized to pursue a negotiated lease agreement with Hydro One for use of the hydro corridor lands between Yonge Street and Jordanray Boulevard for parking and trail uses in connection with the Mulock Property; and,
5. That Staff be directed to contact representatives of Criterion Development Corporation being the adjacent landowner on Yonge Street to the north of the Mulock Property to pursue conveyance of the adjoining woodlot through a development application or otherwise; and
6. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the final draft Master Plan for the Mulock Property. The Master Plan is the result of extensive engagement with the community and concept design work through a Town-initiated process. The Plan identifies features that will enhance the natural beauty of the property and open it up for public enjoyment. With endorsement of the final draft Master Plan, the next step would be to proceed with the detailed design work necessary to implement the features according to a phased approach and subject to budget approvals.

Background

In 2018, the Town of Newmarket purchased approximately 4.6-hectares of land from the Mulock family as the last remaining property originally known as the Mulock Farm, located in the northwest quadrant of Yonge Street and Mulock Drive. Through a master plan process, the Town's intention has been to establish an iconic, signature public park space that also celebrates the historic significance of the property. With the assistance of the PLANT Architect team as consultants, the master planning work was separated into two phases: Phase 1 being an extensive engagement with community and stakeholder groups to address some fundamental issues regarding potential adaptive re-use for the house, whether an outdoor skating facility should be planned for the property, and how the adjacent Jim Bond Park should be viewed in the plan for the Mulock Property; and Phase 2 being the development of design concepts leading to a final draft Master Plan.

Master Plan Phase 1

Report #2020-36 Mulock Property Master Plan Phase 1 Reporting – Public Engagement Summary and Design Themes dated May 25, 2020 was presented to Council at the Special Committee of the Whole meeting of the same date. The recommendations stemming from that report were confirmed by Council:

- That the Mulock Property no longer be considered as a potential location for a full-size outdoor ice rink;
- That Jim Bond Park be included in the design options for the Mulock Property;
- That the proposed re-use for the house consider a range of options as described to allow the design of the property to move forward; and
- That Staff and the Consultants be directed to proceed with Phase 2 of the Mulock Property Master Plan to prepare three (3) design options based on combinations of five (5) design principles.

Through the Phase 1 consultations, 5 guiding design principles were distilled and have remained consistent throughout the development of the Master Plan:

- *Destination* – Ensure this site becomes a significant place to visit in Newmarket
- *Rooted in History and Forward Looking* – Share the multiple layers of history and evolution of the Town on the site including indigenous history
- *Natural* – Maintain and enhance the natural features of the landscape
- *Connected* – Connect the site with the neighbouring areas (Jim Bond Park, the hydro corridor) through pedestrian walkways, trails and cycling routes, to ensure it is integrated within the Town of Newmarket
- *Inclusive and Accessible* – Create an inclusive and accessible site for all residents and visitors

There were a number of elements based on early consultations, that also warranted further assessment during the development of concept designs, and they related to: inclusion of a skate path, parking size and location, and the incorporation of water features.

The Consultation Program undertaken during Phase 1 consisted of an intense engagement with the public, staff, Council and internal and external stakeholders – over 3000 people — over fall 2019 and winter 2020. These public consultations were held in person and were concluded prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Master Plan Phase 2: Three Design Concepts

At the September 29, 2020 Special Committee of the Whole meeting, Report #2020-68 Mulock Property Design Concepts was presented along with the work from PLANT Architect describing three design concepts for the Mulock Park. They were unveiled as themed versions:

- Energized: Village Green
- Expressive: Culture Hub
- Peaceful: Arboretum

To varying degrees, each incorporated amenities that reflected the 5 guiding principles established earlier in the design process.

The three design concepts included elements such as: trails and pathways providing access to and within the park, including a skating trail, parking and vehicular pick-up/drop-off loop, large and moderately-sized open space areas, preservation of significant natural heritage features, restoration of historic gardens and creation of new community gardens and horticultural areas including a conservatory, water features, fire pit, iconic art and interpretive art installations and integration of the existing Jim Bond Park in a passive way connecting to existing trails and open spaces.

As part of this stage, on July 29, 2020, Councillor Broome, Town staff, along with consultants PLANT Architect Inc. and PROCESS, conducted a virtual meeting with approximately 27 local residents from the adjacent neighbourhood in attendance.

The objective of the conversation was to better understand neighbours' experiences and perspectives on the vision for the site and create a dialogue to build mutual understanding and collectively design solutions to address concerns. The conversation focused on three priority topics that were raised in previous consultations: 1) Thoughtful integration of Jim Bond Park with the site, 2) Noise and privacy; and 3) Traffic and parking.

After unveiling the three design concepts for the Mulock Park on September 29, 2020, significant consultation was further undertaken, including:

- A Council tour of the site with subsequent media tour to highlight the location of potential amenities (September 30)
- A public meeting over Facebook Live which attracted approximately 150 people who provided feedback and asked questions after a presentation of the concepts (September 30)
- An on-line survey through the Town's HeyNewmarket digital platform where visitors could view the design concepts and leave additional comments. This resulted in about 250 responses (September 29 through October 12)
- A meeting with the Diverse Thinkers group providing a range of perspectives from representatives of different stakeholder groups (October 6)

Master Plan Phase 2 (continued): Developed Design Concept – Mulock Arboretum

Report #2020-89 Mulock Property Emerging Design Concept, dated December 1, 2020, and Report #2021-08 Mulock Property Developed Design Concept, dated February 9, 2021, were each provided to a Council along with a presentation from PLANT Architect at a Special Committee of the Whole meeting of the same date(s). These opportunities provided updates on the design concept that was emerging as preferred -- one that placed emphasis on preserving and enhancing the natural elements of the property while animating spaces on site with attractive water features, gardens, horticultural and artistic spaces. The design concept was further refined with input from design team members with specialties in lighting, ice infrastructure, vehicular routing and functional servicing.

During the early part of 2021, there was also consultation with two advisory committees at the Town, namely: the Accessibility Advisory Committee (January 21st) and the Heritage Committee (February 2nd). Their comments and input were received and taken into account as the plan was refined.

After receiving comments from Council, the concept plan was presented for illustration and opportunity for input with the community at a virtual Public Information Centre (PIC) again conducted over Facebook Live on March 9, 2021. Comments were generally supportive of the concept plan and have been included in the attached appendix to the PLANT Master Plan Phase 2 report.

Discussion

As indicated above, the final draft Master Plan was presented at a PIC on March 9, 2021 and is being presented for endorsement by Council on April 20, 2021. In describing the final draft plan, it is appropriate to draw from the Mulock Property Master Plan Phase II report by PLANT Architect Inc.,

“The majority of the community engagement indicated that preserving natural features is a top priority. Although the final master plan is a hybrid of the three plans, keeping the site peaceful and natural is the most prominent. The park combines preserving the essence of the natural features with a series of “episodes” of activity with art, recreation, education, community gathering, and garden/landscape experiences. Activities and cultural/expressive functions have been geared towards this overarching desire, with smaller activities and art/culture distributed in small pockets across the entire site.

The site has multiple new destinations including an entry bridge over a constructed wetland and riverine water feature along the Yonge Street edge; a looping skate trail through the woods; a skate pond/wet plaza; a conservatory and artist residency studio; Indigenous and Diversity Gardens; and a natural playground. The site has many existing destinations including the house, beautiful woods, shaped open lawns and the historic garden. Trails linking these zones will encourage people to explore different parts of the site on each visit.”

The full presentation and Phase II report for the final draft Master Plan for the Mulock Property is attached as an appendix to this report. Suggested phasing and costing for the overall project elements are included. It is proposed that the design for the park elements be undertaken in its entirety so as to be ready for various phased implementation plans according to Council’s intentions for timing and funding approvals. Ideally, the central elements would be constructed as a first phase with periphery elements brought on in subsequent phases through separate or cordoned off access so as not to disturb the enjoyment of the early completions on site.

A Class D cost estimate has been prepared for the complete project, which at this point due to the preliminary timing and concept nature of the design includes a 20% design contingency, a 10% construction contingency and an 8.3% escalation contingency for phased construction over 3 years. The estimate totals approximately \$30 million for construction costs and a further \$7.3 million in soft costs for project management, design, contract administration and other supporting studies.

With this report the Master Planning process for the Mulock Property comes to an end, and the final draft Master Plan is presented to Council for endorsement.

Next Steps

As the Master Plan process has now been completed, the next step will be to move to an Implementation process. This will involve preparation of detailed designs and procuring contractors to undertake the construction.

Project Management

Project management will also be a vital component and the Town would need to seek the retention of either a Project Manager or the services of a Project Management consultant on a multi-year basis. A Project Manager would be retained on either a multi-year contract that potential could lead to a full-time position for this and other major Town-initiated projects, or hired full-time from the outset. Alternatively, a Project Management consultant would be required for 3-5 years during the implementation period, and would very likely result in higher costs. The preference would be for in-house project management to provide increased connection between the project, staff, Council, the community and stakeholders.

Detailed Design

A separate report on the same agenda is the subject of retaining appropriate detail design and contract drawing/tendering/administration services for the Mulock Park. The report outlines the merits of continuing with such services and provides an estimated timeline which would be anticipated for each stage of implementation. It is estimated that the design, tender and contractor procurement stages could be completed in 16-19 months, after which construction would commence on the elements as approved by Council.

Hydro Corridor and Adjacent Woodlot

It should be noted that during the course of developing the Master Plan, two related issues will require further work on the part of the Town in coordination with adjacent properties. These are: i) securing an agreement with Hydro One for use of lands in the nearby hydro corridor to support additional parking and trail connections, and ii) conveyance of the woodlot on adjoining lands at Yonge Street to develop the skating trail.

With respect to the hydro corridor use, initial exploratory correspondence with Property representatives of Hydro One has resulted in a favourable response in principle. Requests for additional supporting technical drawings and reports are required and will have to be prepared to advance a lease agreement. Staff would also negotiate a fee for use of the property which could include an annual financial amount and/or services in-lieu within the hydro corridor.

Initial discussions with Criterion Development Corporation representatives as owners of the adjoining Yonge Street property to the north of the Mulock Property have also been favourable in terms of recognizing potential mutual benefits. The Mulock Park would offer a significant adjacent amenity to any future development while the conveyance of the woodlot would provide the Town with the space needed for the implementation of the skate trail. This conveyance and other potential public connections through to the hydro corridor could be secured through the development application and approval process or other means to be discussed with the owners. No plans have been received for adjacent development as yet, and discussion with the owners remain on-going.

Conclusion

The presentation of the Master Plan for the Mulock Property brings the master planning phase for future use of the property to a close. The design experience has truly been a collaboration among an engaged Community, Council, stakeholders, Staff and professional design and consultation services provided by the PLANT Architect team.

Design elements within the Master Plan aim to build on the existing natural beauty and heritage of the property for the passive and active recreational enjoyment of the public.

Subject to endorsement of the Master Plan, the next stage would be implementation of the featured elements starting with securing project management services and undertaking detail design drawings to secure construction.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

The development of a Mulock Property Master Plan is an important Council Strategic Priority for the 2018-2022 term of Council.

Consultation

The development of the final draft Master Plan for the Mulock Property was the result of significant consultation with members of the public, Council, stakeholders, the consultant design team and staff through early in-person and subsequent virtual means.

SLT has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Human Resource Considerations

In order to progress to the next Implementation stage, Project Management resources will be required. Preference is to retain a Project Manager on a multi-year contract or on a permanent basis from the outset, rather than retain Project Management consulting services in the alternate.

Budget Impact

A Class D cost estimate has been prepared for the complete project, which at this point due to the preliminary timing and concept nature of the design includes a 20% design contingency, a 10% construction contingency and an 8.3% escalation contingency for phased construction over 3 years. The estimate totals approximately \$30 million for construction costs and a further \$7.3 million in soft costs for project management, design, contract administration and other supporting studies.

A separate report on the same agenda relates to the Mulock Park budget. It provides a funding strategy to provide the required capital and operating budgets necessary for realization of the Mulock Park as envisioned in the Master Plan. The approach seeks Capital Spending Authority for the entire project starting with detailed design and leading to a multi-year construction program with phased in funding. It utilizes Development Charge reserves (for Capital funding), Assessment Growth revenues (for Operating funding) and other appropriate allocations such that there would be no additional tax impact.

Funding for the retention of project management services and consulting services to undertake detailed design leading to phased construction is included in the budget and the recommendations of this separate budget report.

Attachments

Mulock Property Master Plan – Phase II Report with Appendix, PLANT Architect Inc.

Approval

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Jag Sharma, Chief Administrative Officer

Contact

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