

Summit Park project to be funded from Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland reserve



To fund the expanded project at Summit Park, including adding a new playground, fitness park, and other amenities to the site, the Town is recommending a doubled budget from the Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland reserve.

The budget was recommended to increase from \$300,000 to \$600,000 at last week's General Committee meeting. Staff noted in a report that there are no adverse impacts to any other known commitments if funded from the reserve.

Acknowledging that the reserve will receive reduced contributions in the future, Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo asked whether these changes have been taken into account.

Rachel Wainwright-van Kessel, Director of Finance, said that as part of the changes from recent legislation, it is required for municipalities to commit Cash-in-Lieu Parkland funds and use them for various infrastructure needs.

?And this is an eligible project that could use these types of funds,? she said.

She added that they have factored in what the future Cash-in-Lieu Parkland revenue will be.

?That's part of our reserve analysis that we do in our forecast that's as part of that 10-year plan. So, the forecast balances over the 10 years factors in what our conservative estimates are and what we receive in Cash-in-Lieu Parkland.?

Although the amount collected by developers towards Cash-in-Lieu Parkland has been significantly reduced, Wainwright van Kessel said it is still a requirement to commit the funds as well.

The Town has been building their reserve for quite some time, she said, adding that ?this is a way to show that we are actually using those funds for infrastructure needs.?

?There is a reduction to how much we can collect for Development Charges (DCs) now as well. There are some things that become ineligible, there's also a phasing in of the cost of increases to the DC so when you see our new study come through next year, we'll have a five-year phasing of any incremental DC so there is some loss to them there. But the Cash-in-Lieu Parkland is collected a bit differently to the way the rest of the development charges are because there's an opportunity to also receive land instead.?

Councillor Gallo suggested that the reserve funds should be good as long as someone keeps an eye on it, considering that the amount being collected is significant.

?I understand it is pretty significant, almost up to half as much as we would have collected normally, which is significant and will impact these reserves. So as long as someone's keeping an eye on it,? he said.

Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland said she was really happy to see the results of the survey in support of the project and is glad to see a ?refresh? in the neighbourhood.

?The fact that we can offer some physical activity and fitness that is more affordable to everybody,? she said, ?I think it is really a great way to encourage more physical activity, great for their mental health and their physical health.?

By Elisa Nguyen