



Staff Report

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Report To: Special General Government Committee

Date of Meeting: September 16, 2024 **Report Number:** CAO-004-24

Authored by: Justin MacLean, Director, Strategic Initiatives

Reviewed By: Mary-Anne Dempster, CAO

By-law Number: **Resolution Number:**

File Number:

Report Subject: Draft Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan and Financial Analysis

Recommendation:

1. That Report CAO-004-24, and any related delegations or communication items, be received;
2. That Staff be directed to receive, and consider, comments from the public and Council regarding the draft Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan and prepare a subsequent recommendation report for the meeting of October 28, 2024; and
3. That all interested parties listed in Report CAO-004-24, and any delegations, be advised of Council's decision.

Report Overview

The purpose of this report is to share the draft Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (Attachment 1) with Council and the community. This will initiate the final period of public engagement on this cross-functional project, to confirm support of the Master Plan by Council, the public, and key stakeholders.

1. Background

- 1.1 Public spaces connect people to their community. As Clarington grows, recreational and leisure needs are changing and diversifying. That's why, as directed by Council in April 2023 in Report [PDS-26-23](#), the Municipality of Clarington is creating a Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan (PRCMP): to understand and plan for services and facilities to meet the community's needs now and in the future.
- 1.2 The Master Plan maps out Clarington's current resources and assets, creates a vision and makes recommendations for future spaces and services that are fiscally and environmentally sustainable while suiting the unique needs of the community for the next 10 to 15 years.
- 1.3 Monteith Brown Planning Consultants was retained in July 2023 to develop the PRCMP. Guided by a Terms of Reference prepared by the Municipality, development of the Master Plan was divided into five phases. Phase 1 consisted of background review, data collection, and preliminary analysis, as well as an inventory of facilities, programs, and services. Phase 2 focused on community engagement with residents, stakeholders, staff, and Council through a variety of engagement tactics; as shared with Council in Report [PDS-011-2024](#). A draft master plan was closely reviewed by staff in Phase 3, inclusive of recommendations for parks, recreation, and culture facilities, and delivering services, and recommendations.
- 1.4 Currently, the project is at Stage 4: sharing the draft master plan with Council and the public for final review and comment. Following presentation to Council, a public engagement period will open for approximately three weeks. Following this, input will be considered and incorporated into the final Master Plan, which will be delivered for Council's approval at the October 28, 2024 Council meeting.

2 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

Master Plan Development and Recommendations

- 2.1 Clarington's Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan was developed through extensive community engagement, staff and Council consultation (workshops, advisory committees, board meetings and interviews) and data collection, review and analysis.

- 2.2 Comparisons with other municipalities have been considered, although it is important to recognize that provision models differ in other communities due to the local context. For example, Clarington's large geographic land base and growth patterns (which are focused in three urban areas) are different from more concentrated municipalities. Clarington's large geographic area also requires the need to provide a higher level of service compared to other municipalities to ensure that the distribution and availability of facilities is equitable and is positioned to serve growth.
- 2.3 The proposed Master Plan includes 111 recommendations in the areas of Parks, Facilities, Culture, Service Delivery and Implementation.

Parks

- 2.4 The PRCMP includes a Parks Plan, which provides the Municipality with direction on planning, acquiring, developing, and designing parks, as well as guidance on enhancing Clarington's recreational trail system based on available park data, existing approaches and best practices in other municipalities, provincial legislation, and other key inputs. This section satisfies the Municipality's requirement for a Parks Plan under Section 42 of the Planning Act that examines the need for parks.

Facilities

- 2.5 The Facilities Plan section of the proposed Master Plan provides the Municipality and Clarington Library, Museum and Archives (CLMA) with guidance on enhancing existing and developing new community facilities for recreation, culture, libraries, museums and archives to address service gaps, respond to evolving interests, or to address growing community needs.
- 2.6 The Master Plan analyzes facility needs over the planning period and recommendations are identified at the end of each sub-section. Recommendations are not based upon one specific factor, but consider several factors, including background documents and plans, population and demographic characteristics, trends and best practices, inventory and distribution, facility utilization and program data, and service level targets.
- 2.7 The Master Plan compares our current state of service delivery targets in facilities compared to ideal service levels and requirements in the future to accommodate population growth.

Culture

- 2.8 The proposed Master Plan provides guidance on elevating culture in Clarington and celebrating local arts, diversity, events, and people.

- 2.9 Both The Municipality of Clarington and CLMA deliver valued cultural services and programming, including special events and festivals, public art, community building, place-making and more. The Master Plan includes analysis of Clarington's strengths in these areas and recommendations for strategic improvements to foster culture. It also places priority on supporting and engaging Indigenous Peoples by working collaboratively to develop strategies and programs to ensure the Municipality's parks, recreation and culture program supports reconciliation.

Delivery of Services

- 2.10 The proposed Master Plan provides the Municipality and CLMA with guidance on delivering services to meet the needs of current and future residents. Recommendations are based on community input, as well as research and best practices in other municipalities to provide the Municipality and CLMA with key directions to strengthen internal capacity, improve service delivery, engage underrepresented populations, and make evidence-based decisions.

Implementation Strategy

- 2.11 An implementation summary is contained in the proposed Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan. By approving this Master Plan, the Municipality of Clarington and CLMA are not bound to implementing every recommendation and providing the facilities in the order, amount, or timing indicated; rather the Master Plan provides the Municipality and CLMA with guidance on community priorities and sets a general course of action to meet needs as they are presently defined.
- 2.12 For each recommendation, resource implications have been identified, particularly if there is a capital cost required for facility development or further study, if additional staffing will be required for operations, management, and service delivery, or if staff time is required. The current draft includes high-level preliminary analysis of staffing levels required for new amenities. These assumptions will be confirmed when the final report is submitted.
- 2.13 The timing of the recommendations proposed in the Master Plan recognizes the need for phased implementation, partnerships, and/or outside funding sources, as some recommendations are based upon what is needed and not necessarily what may be financially achievable at the present time. The timing of initiatives is organized into short, medium and long-term deliverables.
- 2.14 The Master Plan identifies the need to be reviewed regularly to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of implementation. Analysis of implementation options and capital/operating budget implications should be undertaken prior to approving major projects, as well as various funding sources and partnership opportunities. Many of the recommendations will need to be implemented through the Clarington Official Plan, as part of the upcoming review process.

3 Financial Considerations

- 3.1 With the completion of the Master Plan, the Municipality of Clarington will have the information required to:
- Undertake a new Development Charge Background Study to embrace the identified growth-related capital needs related to parkland development, recreation, and library services;
 - Update the Parkland Dedication By-law to maximize the amount of parkland conveyance and/or payment-in-lieu funds from future growth that is allowable under the Planning Act;
 - Consider capital needs in excess of the parkland provisions of the Planning Act, and Development Charges Act provisions, through a Community Benefits Charge Strategy;
 - Consider when an update to the user fees by-law(s) should be undertaken to embrace updated fees for new facilities, services, and/or programs identified in the Master Plan;
 - Consider applying for funding through grant programs that are/become available related to these services; and
 - Consider the impacts of future financial needs to be funded through property taxes, during future budgeting process.
- 3.2 The Master Plan requires financial investment in Clarington's parks, recreation, culture, and library system, and it outlines a series of priorities for new infrastructure to meet growth-related needs, as well as to upgrade, modernize, or renew aging assets to better respond to community expectations. Clarington has limited resources, and it cannot afford to do everything that the community desires, underscoring the importance of undertaking this Master Plan to prioritize needs and resources.
- 3.3 High-level capital cost estimates have been identified within the Master Plan for the recommended new facility needs to meet current and future needs towards 2036. Given that these are high-level capital cost estimates, they will need to be reviewed and confirmed prior to any facility construction, or as part of a future Master Plan update, as there are many factors that influence actual costs, such as availability of materials and labour, quality of fit and finishes, consulting fees, and other variables.
- 3.4 The preliminary capital cost estimates, in 2024 dollars, of approximately \$385 million were completed by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. and have been attached to this report (Attachment 2, page 22).

- 3.5 The cost estimates include \$159.4 million for parkland acquisition and \$13.9 million for parkland development. Approximately \$184 million relates to the capital infrastructure needs identified in the plan, including indoor facilities, such as arenas, aquatics, library, and community spaces, and outdoor recreation, such as sports fields and playgrounds. The cost estimate also includes approximately \$27.5 million in studies and additional amenities (e.g. trail development).

4 Strategic Plan

- 4.1 The PRCMP is a key part of Clarington's 2024-27 Strategic Plan, listed under priority G.2.3: *Develop and complete Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan and Prioritize action items for implementation.*

5 Climate Change

- 5.1 The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan recommends that Clarington design new and redeveloped parks and facilities with a climate change lens; with regard for guiding frameworks such as the Clarington Corporate Climate Action Plan to achieve the Municipality's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 35% by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050.

6 Concurrence

- 6.1 This report has been reviewed by the Deputy CAO of Planning and Infrastructure, Deputy CAO of Finance and Technology/Treasurer, and Deputy CAO of Public Services, who concur with the recommendation.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 It is respectfully recommended that staff be directed to proceed with Phase 4 of the PRCMP: Draft Master Plan and Consultation, by sharing the draft Master Plan with stakeholders and the public for a public engagement period of three weeks, and that staff prepare a subsequent recommendation report for the Council meeting of October 28, 2024.

Staff Contact: Justin MacLean, Director, Strategic Initiatives, jmaclean@clarington.net

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Draft Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

Attachment 2 – Financial Analysis – Draft

Interested Parties:

List of Interested Parties available from Department.