CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure Division

TO: Chair and Members
Public Works Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: WARD 3

COMMITTEE DATE: March 22, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
Gage Park Master Plan (PW10033) - (Ward 3)

SUBMITTED BY:
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SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION

(a) That the Gage Park Master Plan preferred option, as shown in Appendix "A" of Report PW10033 be approved;

(b) That Community Services and Public Works staff be directed to complete a detailed cost analysis of the Central Hub Complex as shown in Appendix “B” attached to Report PW10033 and associated landscape components and to report back to Council regarding funding requirements through the 2011 capital budget process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gage Park Master Plan process has spanned the past five years. Recommendations from the public, stakeholders, City Councillors and City staff, as well as multiple background studies, have shaped the current Master Plan design. Four preliminary master plan designs were explored and presented to the public, demonstrating increasing levels of change to the works yard, auxiliary buildings and parking. The current plan draws on the strengths of all four concepts. The new park vision will provide greater protection of cultural heritage elements to strengthen the park as a cultural landscape and showcase it as the City’s premier park on a regional level. The new park master plan sets out the foundation to provide many new financial

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benefits for the east end of Hamilton through positioning the park as a regional tourist destination. New year-round park facilities will draw additional visitors to this City attraction creating an economic stimulus through expanded programming opportunities. It respects the existing well loved features of the park while highlighting others that require rehabilitation. One of the main accomplishments of the Park Master Plan (Appendix A) is that it caters to future needs but also meets current cultural and social needs of the community that supports and surrounds the park.

Highlights of the Master Plan include:

- Strengthening the elegance of the historic water features, ornamental flower beds and the overall park geometry;
- Introducing buildings for the growing Children’s Museum, tropical greenhouse and aviary, using green building technologies;
- Finding creative solutions to keep stormwater runoff within the park, and help mitigate flooding issues in the adjacent Rothsay community.

Alternatives for Consideration - See Page 7

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Community Services and Public Works staff will submit a request for funding through the 2011 capital budget for the cost to engineer the Central Hub Complex and associated landscape components based on a phasing strategy.

Staffing: Project management for the design engineering of the Central Hub Complex can be accommodated by existing resources within the Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure Division.

Legal: Gage Park is currently included in the City’s Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest as approved by Council on October 29, 2008 through report PED08211. Under the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, City Council shall be given at least 60 days notice in writing of the intention to demolish or remove a building or structure or to permit the demolition or removal of a building or structure.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Public Works initiated the master plan process in November 2005 in response to the growing pressure from the special events held within the park, organized sports, and a growing concern over maintenance issues that required specialized attention due to ongoing vandalism. Several items were identified for park infrastructure updates and rehabilitation: the restoration of the wrought iron fence along Main Street; the repair of granular pathways, rehabilitation of the pergola, improvements to the perennial garden irrigation system, park lighting, upgrade of Gage Fountain mechanical systems and site drainage and the need to formalize and improve accessibility to the main pedestrian entrance at the corner of Gage Avenue and Main Street. In addition both the existing greenhouses and Children’s Museum were identified by staff as candidate buildings for major rehabilitation. The issue of convenient access to the Tropical House was also identified by public using the facility.

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Along with regular maintenance deficiencies, vandalism to park structures created a general decline of park amenities and raised safety concerns for the general public. Major park infrastructure upgrades were placed on hold, pending the outcome of the Park Master Plan. The master plan study was preceded by the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Report, a Stage 1 and Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment and a Geotechnical Investigation for the proposed expansion to the Children’s Museum. The CPTED report prepared by Hamilton Police in 2004 identified several areas targeted by vandals that include: the Band Shell, the Gage Fountain and vegetation encroachments onto park pathways. The Archaeological Assessment prepared by Archaeological Services Inc. in 2008 concluded that there is potential for the recovery of historic cultural material associated with this important park. A 2008 Stage 2 assessment conducted at the north end of the park in the area of the Gage Fountain and formal gardens did not reveal any archaeological resources. The study did recommend that future areas of the park planned for redevelopment will require a Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment prior to future disturbance. In 1990, the City’s Culture staff prepared an operational assessment and expansion plan for the Children’s Museum at the current Gage House within the park. The museum opened in 1978 and was designed to serve an anticipated audience of 7,000. The report findings provided recommendations for expansion to accommodate the average annual attendance of 29,000. The findings also identified the poor location of the facility as not central to the park. In 2005, the Horticulture and Forestry Section of Public Works prepared a 10 year condition assessment of the Horticulture building and greenhouses identifying repairs to the building foundations, glass and HVAC systems.

Four schematic plans were drawn that reflected increasing levels of change in the park. The plans were revised and modified following several stakeholder meetings. The final versions of the four concepts were presented to the public in June 2006. The current master plan has taken into consideration both public and City staff comments, and combined elements from all four original concept plans. At the forefront of the master plan design is the historic integrity of the original 1922 Dunington-Grubb master plan. Howard Grubb, often called the father of landscape architecture in Canada, prepared a Master Plan for the park 88 years ago that contained a formal garden adjacent to Main Street and large vistas of open space encircled by carefully planted trees of many varieties. In October 2008, Council approved the inclusion of the property on the City’s Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and assigned the preparation of a cultural heritage assessment and a designating by-law to the Planning staff’s work program (Report PED08211).

Subsequent to the June 2006 meeting two further studies were identified. The business operational review of the works yard complex lead by the then Operations & Maintenance Division provided input into the final physical form requirements for the works yard. The Lower East End Drainage Study led by Strategic Planning Section determined the physical space requirements for storm water management within the east side of the park. Both studies were recently completed allowing the master plan concept to be finalized.

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Gage Park Master Plan adheres to the Public Works Business Plan to be a leader in the “greening” and stewardship of the city through the recommendation to incorporate LEED technologies in the building design and site development methods for management of stormwater. The plan adheres to the Corporate Strategic Plan item 6.2 Reduced impact on City activities on the environment and 6.5 Aspire to the highest environmental standards through an innovative building footprint design and incorporation of low maintenance meadows.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

A public involvement program was prepared early in the master plan process. In addition, a City staff project steering committee was struck that included cross department representation from Public Works and Community Services. The program included a series of focused meetings with stakeholder groups, the Ward Councillor, the general public, the creation of a project web page to provide regular updates and media coverage through the Hamilton Spectator. Over 130 residents were consulted during the project. The purpose of these consultations was to:

- Inform the public, users groups and local residents of the process to redevelop the park;
- Identify the studies required for the future redevelopment of the park;
- Obtain initial public and user group input as to their vision for the park; and
- Identify potential issues.

The meetings were held in the vicinity of Gage Park along with special workshop sessions (table below). Public consultation resulted in the preparation of the park vision and guiding principles and included design objectives such as the reduction in impacts to the large general lawn area and increased public access to the Tropical House.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Location and Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 4, 2006</td>
<td>Stakeholder Workshop</td>
<td>Gage Park Horticulture Bldg 9 am to 12 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 29, 2006</td>
<td>Friends of Gage Park Annual General Meeting</td>
<td>Gage Park Horticulture Bldg 9 am to 12 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 20, 2006</td>
<td>Public Information Centre</td>
<td>St. Peter’s Hospital 6 pm to 8 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 21, 2006</td>
<td>Public Information Centre</td>
<td>St. Brigid’s Elementary School 6 pm to 9 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30, 2006</td>
<td>General Public Display</td>
<td>Gage Park Public Works Trailer 10 am to 4 pm</td>
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<td>It’s Your Festival Gage Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 15, 2007</td>
<td>Park User Survey</td>
<td>Gage Park Main Entry, 10 am to 12 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 3, 2008</td>
<td>Public Information Centre</td>
<td>Adelaide Hoodless Elementary School 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm</td>
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<td>May 10, 2008</td>
<td>Friends of Gage Park Stakeholder Mtg</td>
<td>Gage Park Horticulture Bldg 9:30 am to 12 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 26, 2009</td>
<td>Friends of Gage Park Annual General Meeting</td>
<td>Gage Park Horticulture Bldg 10 am to 12 pm</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Location and Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 17, 2010</td>
<td>Public Information Centre</td>
<td>Prince of Wales School, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 23, 2010</td>
<td>Public Information Centre</td>
<td>Gage Park Horticulture Bldg 6 pm to 8 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Internal Staff consultations include:**
Public Works, Operations and Waste Management  
Public Works, Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure  
Community Services, Recreation  
Community Services, Culture  
Public Works staff presented updates on the Gage Park master plan to the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee on May 2006 and March 2008 (Heritage Permit Review Sub-committee), and the final preferred option was presented on February 25, 2010.

**External Agency consultations include:**  
Hamilton Police Services  
Niagara Escarpment Commission

Staff consultation resulted in the preparation of the park vision and guiding principles and refinement to the park program. The new program additions included:

- A revised storm water management zone that will facilitate future flooding remediation controls as required through the the Roathsay Avenue Flood Remediation Class EA Study to be completed later this spring.
- An expanded Tropical House.
- A multi-use building that will house a larger Children’s Museum.
- An indoor and outdoor aviary that will replace the aging facility in Churchill Park.

In consultation with the Ward Councillor, Recreation staff and the Gage Park Softball Association the softball fields in the southeast corner of the site will remain as part of the long term programming for the park with the final field configuration determined later this year.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The needs of the community and pressures on the park have continually evolved over the last 88 years. Buildings, greenhouses, play structures and a band shell were constructed in the park as well as an active Public Works and Forestry yard. Historically, Gage Park hosted circuses, horse racing, political rallies, live concerts and attracted local residents and visitors with its horticulture excellence. The greenhouses supply annual plants to the City’s cemeteries, business improvement areas, City of Hamilton Parks and Facilities and the City’s Floral Traffic Island program. The greenhouses host the annual Chrysanthemum Show which will be celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2010. The park continues to host several events a year that attract 100,000 people or more as well as many smaller events. The park is currently on the Municipal Registry of property of cultural heritage value. There are many monuments in the park celebrating different nationalities and people who helped to shape the park. Children’s play areas have also been added including a large spray pad in 1999.
The park stakeholders and general park users surveyed see the core organizing elements of the site as key features to be retained and enhanced to form the Park Master Plan (Appendix A). The new park vision will provide greater protection of cultural heritage elements to strengthen the park as a cultural landscape and showcase it as the City’s premier park on a regional level. The new park master plan sets out the foundation to provide many new financial benefits for the end of Hamilton through positioning the park as a regional tourist destination. New year-round park facilities will draw additional visitors to this City attraction creating an economic stimulus through expanding programming opportunities.

Two existing Gage Park programs will be expanded. Both the Children’s Museum and the public tropical greenhouse require larger structures to accommodate their programming needs. The building, greenhouse and surrounding landscape will create a strong sense of entry and arrival from the parking lot. A breezeway between the structures will connect the two building masses and act as an open threshold between the parking lot and Central Green. The new structures will conceal the existing Works Yard and cold frames and provide controlled access to the yard forming a new Central Hub Complex (Appendix B). To support the new building uses, and expected increase in visitors at a regional scale, additional parking will be provided. Disabled parking will be located closest to the building entrance while two school buses will be allowed to park on the western end of the lot. A large drop off area for buses and other vehicles is conveniently placed by the forecourt of the new buildings.

**The Aviary** will be a new program added to the park with both an indoor and outdoor flight area. Due to declining conditions, the existing aviary which originally came from Dundurn Park, has been temporarily located at the Royal Botanical Gardens. To support the new building uses and expected increase in visitors at a regional scale additional parking will be provided. The Aviary requires new permanent facilities to house its collection of tropical birds. The Hamilton Aviary, in existence for 82 years (since 1928) has not had a permanent home since 1992 when it was required to move from Dundurn Castle during renovations in 1993. Currently the Aviary is maintained by the Friends of The Aviary at Churchill Park in rented facilities that are outdated and require extensive repairs. There is limited access to the Public and the location is difficult to find for people from out of the area. Locating the Aviary at Gage Park will provide a modern, expanded facility for the birds, provide better access for the Public, attract visitors from out of town and compliment a newly constructed Tropical House.

**The Children’s Museum** is currently operating at more than 100% capacity, with 24,000 visitors a year. Relocating the Children’s Museum from its current location, to a purpose built building, will increase the size of the facility by almost 5 times its present floor space. This increase will provide galleries that house permanent displays in addition to rotating or travelling exhibits and programming areas. As a result the museum will have the opportunity to engage a wider audience by providing exhibits that are geared to a variety of ages and skill levels from infants to youth. At present the museum has a maximum capacity of 80 persons at one time, this severely limits accessibility to visitors during busier than normal times, special events and curtails the number of school programmes that can be delivered at one time. Relocation of the museum will also allow the facility to enhance its function by providing purpose built
areas for exhibit construction, loading bays to accommodate travelling exhibits, library and parent resources centres. As part of the museum relocation to the new multi-use facility in the Central Hub Complex staff in the Culture Division of Community Services will prepare a business plan for re-use of the Gage House building. In addition activities will be positively affected by integration of programmes with other City departments such as Public Works.

The Tropical House: A new and expanded Tropical House will provide more room and allow for additions to its current Tropical Plant collection. It will also provide easier access for the Public, increase tourism and allow staff to explore additional revenue streams from hosting more floral shows, increased wedding photos etc. The tropical house will include community outreach programs currently unavailable due to space.

The Tropical House and facilities contain the following design elements:
- Associated demonstration gardens adjacent to the structure.
- Two-storey height needed to accommodate tall plant material, currently not possible with the existing tropical house structure.
- Located adjacent and connected to the existing production greenhouses for ease of operation.
- Footprint to be a minimum of 1.5 times greater than existing tropical greenhouse to accommodate regional programming.
- Controlled access to the Work’s Yard from the tropical greenhouse for public safety and security

Stormwater Management: The eastern edge of the park may accommodate a storm water management facility. The proposed purpose of this facility is to detain and dissipate surface water from Rothsay Community located to the east of the park, where combined storm and sanitary infrastructure is exceeding capacity and is in need of relief. Park storm water will also be managed within the park and rely on the same storm water management facility. Surface water will be directed to this facility as well as to bio-retention facilities for smaller drainage areas. The eastern areas of the park will have maintained meadows which will reduce maintenance and lawn care, enhance wildlife, provide educational opportunities and add a unique landscape quality to the park. The final form of this facility will be determined through a separate Class EA process scheduled for completion later this year.

Horticultural Display Gardens: The existing flower beds should be maintained and continue to be designed and planted by horticulture staff. Horticultural excellence has been and should continue to be a long standing feature of the park. Demonstration gardens are included in the park horticulture programming. They will be located in three planting beds north of the Children’s Museum, adjacent to the new tropical greenhouse. Programming in Demonstration Gardens will be an integrated effort between Museum and Horticulture and Parks staff.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

One alternative to the recommended Gage Park master plan would involve adjusting the plan to not include the Central Hub Complex and associated landscape elements
and instead revise the plan to focus on maintenance components only. The benefit to performing major rehabilitation works would improve many of the barrier free issues through conversion of park walkways to hard surface as well as address some of the security concerns through enhanced vegetation management that would include strategic removals of plant material to improve sightlines. The disadvantages to this approach on the long term would result in an increased level of vandalism to newly rehabilitated elements caused by a lack of increased use within the central area of the park where occurrences of vandalism have been high. Staff would need to revise the plans and report and conduct additional communications to the public regarding the revised plan. The communication and redesign process will require additional funding and extend the process on this project six months to one year dependent on capital budget approval. By not proceeding with the relocation of the Children’s Museum the existing facility will remain undersized and limited to existing programming and unsatisfactory site conditions such as lack of parking and lack of space for a proper bus lay by. In addition barrier free accessibility is limited to the current exhibit space and can not be extended to the other parts of the building given the architecture of the Gage House. By not proceeding with the relocation of the Aviary the City will need to invest $320,000 in capital repairs to the existing building in Churchill Park which is currently owned by the Royal Botanical Gardens. By not accommodating the expanded Tropical House the existing Tropical House will require $150,000 for rehabilitation of the mechanical system and exterior walls to maintain the current program.

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**


**Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization**
- More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus
- Cross department collaboration between Public Works and Community Services

**Financial Sustainability**
- Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner
- Increased opportunity to delivery expanded public outreach programs

**Intergovernmental Relationships**
- Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies
- Involvement of Niagara Escarpment Commission to expand connectivity with the escarpment natural area

**Growing Our Economy**
- A visitor and convention destination

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• Expanded programs for the Tropical House, Children’s Museum and Aviary will provide a tourist destination at a regional level.

Social Development
• Residents in need have access to adequate support services
• People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

Environmental Stewardship
• Natural resources are protected and enhanced
• Reduced impact of City activities on the environment
• Aspiring to the highest environmental standards
• Recommendations for LEED technology

Healthy Community
• Plan and manage the built environment
• An engaged Citizenry

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix “A” to Report PW10033 - Park Master Plan
Appendix “B” to Report PW10033 - Central Hub Complex
Location of Key Elements and Systems

A - Historic Integrity
B - Lawrence Road Entry
C - Multi-Use Buildings and Tropical Greenhouses
D - Lawn and Maintained Meadow Landscapes
E - Horticulture Display Gardens
F - Band Shell
G - Children’s Play Area
H - Active Sports in the Park
I - Production Greenhouses, Forestry and Public Work’s Yard
J - Reforestation Guidelines
K - Large Event Management
L - Interpretive Nodes and Outdoor Educational Opportunities