SUBJECT: Skateboard Park Construction at Turner Park (HCS04031b)(City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That City Council approve the construction of a skateboard park at Turner Park, with the understanding that the Hamilton Police Service will provide video surveillance of this skateboarding park, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

(b) That Item “H” respecting The Skateboard Park Construction at Turner Park be identified as completed and removed from the Community Services Outstanding Business List.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager
Public Health and Community Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In April 2004, staff was directed to hold a public open house to seek feedback into the development of a new outdoor skateboard park at T.B. McQueston Park. Construction costs for the new facility would be covered through the Hamilton Future Fund.

During the June 14, 2004 open house, residents expressed concern over the development of the skateboard park at T.B. McQueston Park because of vandalism, public safety, and noise issues. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Hamilton Police Service indicated it would video monitor the skateboarding park 24 hours a day, if the proposed location was changed to Turner Park, next to the Mountain Police Station.
As a result of the offer from the Hamilton Police Service, two public meetings were held with residents living in the Turner Park neighbourhood. Staff was able to propose a new location that was suitable to the majority of residents who attended the final meeting, with the understanding that public safety, vandalism, and noise issues would be addressed.

Staff recommends the construction of a new skateboard park to be located at one of two areas on the north-west corner of Turner Park (Appendix A and B), with the understanding that the Hamilton Police Service will provide video surveillance of the park 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2004, staff was directed to begin the process of building a new skateboard park at T.B. McQuesten Park on Hamilton Mountain. This site was chosen because it had scored the highest during an evaluation process to determine the best location.

A public meeting was conducted at Sackville Hill Seniors Centre on June 14th 2004. The main concerns brought forward at that meeting were vandalism, public safety, and noise. At the conclusion of the public meeting the Hamilton Police Service offered to video-monitor the skateboard park 24 hours a day if it was built next to the Mountain Station in Turner Park.

On May 10, 2005 an open house was held for the general public from Turner Park Neighbourhood who had requested that the proposed location for the skateboard park not be Turner Park, or at least that it be located in a different area of the park. Based on feedback received from the open house, staff revised the original plan and proposed that the skateboard park be built at a new location on the north-west corner of the park.

A second open house was held on October 20, 2005 to receive comments on the proposed new location. Approximately 55 people attended the session and spoke with staff and Ward 6, 7 and 8 Councillors. Twenty-nine comment sheets were filled out, of which 20 residents were in favour of the proposed new site and nine were opposed. Staff also received a petition signed by 55 children supporting a skateboard park at Turner Park.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Although safety and vandalism were raised as public concerns, staff feels the Turner Park location would address these concerns better than any other proposed location. When Turner Park was initially assessed it did not score as high as other parks in the city, however, with the impending construction of the Family “Y” and the Hamilton Public Library, the park was re-assessed and scored second highest next to T.B. McQueston. The park will have public washrooms, a drinking fountain and access to a public telephone. None of these amenities were available when the park was originally assessed. In addition, the Hamilton Police Service has committed to providing video-monitoring of the skateboard park 24 hours a day.
Demographic information for the City of Hamilton shows that the total population of children between the ages of 10 and 19 years of age is 66,685. Of these, almost one third (20,575) of these children live in Wards 6, 7 and 8. The City of Hamilton currently has two skateboard parks, both of which are located below the escarpment.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

If Council does not approve Turner Park as the location for the skateboard park, the Hamilton Trust Fund has asked to have the money returned to it for other City projects.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

**Financial**

$500,000 for the construction of the skateboard facilities was approved by the previous Council to come from the Hamilton Trust Fund.

Ongoing maintenance costs associated with these facilities would be related to seasonal cleaning, removal of graffiti, some of which could be included in the partnership with The Skateboard Assembly. If staff are unable to negotiate the partnership, this will be a budget deficit for Public Works. Parks Operation and Maintenance staff has estimated this cost to be $10,000 per annum.

**Staffing**

The facility will not be supervised by City staff. Staff has discussed a possible partnership with the Hamilton Skateboard Assembly (a local skateboarding association), to operate programs and special events.

**Legal**

Legal implications for the City would be similar to the current situations at the Beasley Park and Parkdale Park skateboard facilities. Due to the nature of this activity, participants and spectators have a higher than normal exposure to injury. Skateboarders are subject to injuries ranging from scrapes and scratches to broken limbs, severe head injuries and even death. This risk of injury raises the standard of care that must be provided by the park operator. Providing a safe and well-maintained facility with adequate controls is vital to mitigating the City’s liability in the absence of supervisory staff. Signage regarding zero tolerance to violence and recommending personal protective equipment and clear safety rules will be required, attached hereto as Appendix C to Report HCS04031(b).

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

The Corporation’s Tendering Policy would be adhered to once approval is received to design and construct the new facility.
RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Hamilton Police Services  
Public Works Department, Parks and Cemeteries Section  
Public Works Department, Operations and Maintenance Section  
Corporate Services, Risk Management  
Legal Services and Corporate Counsel  
The Skateboard Assembly (TSA)  
Hamilton Public Library Board  
Hamilton Family “Y”

The Hamilton Public Library Board and the Family “Y” have both endorsed this proposed location.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Opportunities for physical activity are supported and enhanced. This report addresses a need related to a youth-specific activity for a specialized recreation facility. The skateboarding community is growing and getting older and, as a result, these facilities will provide a much needed designated space for skateboarders, moving them out of the streets and parking lots of businesses.

A healthy and active community will be supported by the construction of this facility by directing the youth of our community to a safe and secure place where they can improve their skateboarding skills.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Not applicable.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Not applicable.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?

☐ Yes ☑ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?

☐ Yes ☑ No

Not applicable.
PARK RULES

- This is an unsupervised park. It is recommended that youth 10 years of age and under be accompanied by a parent/guardian.
- No one is permitted in the park between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- This skateboard course is intended for skateboard use only. No moving of elements or bringing in of elements.
- No motorized vehicles permitted outside of parking area.
- Skateboarding is a high risk activity that can result in injury. The use of protective gear is recommended.
- Abide by flow in open areas. Only one person on a ramp at a time.
- Skate park use during inclement weather is not recommended due to increased risk of injury.
- The City does not assume any liability for injury to participants or spectators involved in any activities connected with skateboarding.
- The nearest public phones are at XXXXXXX In an emergency call 911.
- No drugs or alcohol allowed in park.
- No pushing, shoving, rough housing; no inappropriate language or loud music. The City of Hamilton reserves the right to eject a participant from the facility for reasons of safety and fairness to other participants.
- This is your park – your help in preserving it will ensure you can use it for years to come. To report damage call 905-546-2489.

CITY OF HAMILTON
BY-LAW 01-219

MAXIMUM FINE $5,000.00