



**OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM**

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TMP-31561

TO: MAYOR A. NUTTALL AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: D. FRIARY, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

WARD: ALL

NOTED: B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P.Eng., PMP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE, AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

C. MILLAR, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER & TREASURER

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: NEW INVESTMENT AND SERVICE RECOMMENDATION FORM 2828

DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2023

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with additional information related to New Investment and Service Recommendation Form 2828. The information addresses questions raised at General Committee on November 29, 2023 with an emphasis on service levels associated with Form 2828 and the proposed amendment to Form 2828.

BACKGROUND

Form 2828 requests three additional staffing resources to meet the service levels in relation to new parks, trails, sports fields, sports courts, natural areas, and streetscape features. Staffing resources to operate and maintain park and horticultural assets since 2018 are summarized below.

Section	2018				2023			
	Full time	Seasonal/ PT (Apr-Nov)	Seasonal/ PT (Dec-Mar)	Students (May-Aug)	Full time	Seasonal/ PT (Dec-Mar)	Seasonal/ PT Apr-Nov	Students (May-Aug)
Parks	10	22	4	25	8	4	24	28
Horticulture	7	6	2	22	5	2	8	20
Total	17	28	6	47	13	6	32	48

While the majority of asset maintenance is in the spring to fall seasonal timeframe, that is also when staffing levels are at their peak. During the winter, Parks and Horticulture staff levels drop to thirteen (13) full-time CUPE staff and six (6) seasonal/PT staff.

Between 2018 and 2023, the operations team will have assumed responsibility for the following new assets:

- Two (2) Neighbourhood Parks (Muirfield Park & Gateland Park)
- Sixteen (16) pickleball courts (at Painswick Park and Eastview Park)
- Two (2) basketball courts (at Loyalist Park and Gateland Park)
- Three (3) baseball diamonds
- Three (3) accessible playgrounds (at Painswick Park, St. Vincent Park, and Gateland Park)
- Dunlop Streetscape horticulture features
- Upgraded downtown Library landscape
- Several kms of new trail systems



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- Grass maintenance along several kms of new road ROW (Harvey Road, Mapleview Drive E, King Street, Veterans Drive)

Further details associated with new assets within specific parks are illustrated in Appendix “A” to Memorandum dated December 6, 2023 for ease of reference.

The three additional staff (1 gardener, and 2 parks attendants) were requested primarily to provide additional services at the above facilities.

Of the three positions, the gardener was identified as a priority mainly due to the specialized nature of the gardener’s role and the inability of other positions to provide the required expertise associated with this role. In addition, the greenhouse is a seven-day a week, year-round operation requiring support to grow all the plants for city gardens.

While the park operational activities and the need for the resources peak during the Spring to Fall period, resources are also required during the winter period for the following activities:

- Plowing and salting waterfront multi-use pathways, Meridian Square, and the pathway to and around the I Heart Barrie sign
- Inspecting playgrounds
- Grooming cross country and fat bike trails at Sunnidale Park,
- Maintaining the dog off leash parks (clearing entrances and gates), collecting garbage
- Inspecting toboggan hills daily for hazards
- Refurbishing or replacing park signs, benches, picnic tables, and parks equipment as required
- Supporting winter events, outdoor fireplaces, maintaining outdoor rinks and supporting volunteers with volunteer rinks
- Prepping for seasonal staff start-up and training

TURF MANAGEMENT / GRASS CUTTING SERVICE LEVELS

The below table describes the service level targets for turf maintenance showing the current (2023) compared to the 2017 service levels.

Asset Type	Current (2023) Cut Cycle	2017 Cut Cycle	Operational Practices
Booked Sports fields	Twice every 5 business days	Twice every 5 business days	Irrigation of fields, fertilizing, over seeding, top dressing, turf inspections, irrigation repairs
Waterfront	Once every 5 business days	Once every 5 business days	Fertilizing, over seeding, top dressing, turf inspections
Community and Neighbourhood Parks and Facilities	Once every 7 business days	Once every 5 business days	Fertilizing, turf inspections, path inspections
Residential Area Boulevards (e.g. behind properties)	Once every 8 business days	Once every 5 business days	Mowing, turf repairs, inspections, Traffic Control
Non-residential area boulevards (e.g. industrial subdivisions)	Once every 10 business days	Once every 10 business days	Mowing, turf repairs, inspections, Traffic Control
Rough cut areas (e.g. roadside ditches, pipeline, dry stormwater ponds)	Once per month	Once per month	With rough-cut mower unit (tractor)



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To manage the changes from 2017 to 2023 and create efficiencies in the turf maintenance program, the eight (8) turf zones (or crews) were redistributed into seven (7) zones. This extended the cutting cycle for neighbourhood parks and boulevards, while allowing the reconfigured crews to continue efforts on maintaining the higher cutting cycles in the sports fields.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO FORM 2828

The 2024 New Investment and Service Recommendation Form 2828 included 3 full time staff (1-Gardener and 2-Park Maintenance Attendants), vehicle rentals, equipment and supplies, and maintenance at a cost of \$310,269 to be funded from tax levy, and capital expenditures of \$225,900 in 2024 and \$365,000 in 2024 to be funded from Development Charge Parks and Recreation Reserve.

The capital expenditures would have included the purchase of two (2) dump trucks, one (1) Utility terrain Vehicle (UTV), one (1) pickup truck, one (1) mower, and one (1) trailer.

The new investments would have allowed 2023 service levels to be maintained including for the new park assets as outlined above.

At General Committee on November 29, 2023, a proposed amendment that would modify Form 2828 was discussed. The modified Form 2828 would generally consist of the following:

- One Gardener position at a budget amount of \$102,303 funded from tax levy;
- Increase the Operations overall budget for seasonal staff by \$34,000 to be funded from tax levy; or
- Delete all capital expenditures associated with Form 2828

Staff have reviewed the modifications to Form 2828 proposed by the amendment. Based on the review, the following adjustments to the service levels and practices would likely be required to parks and trails maintenance:

Parks Maintenance

- Keep Queens Park ball diamond closed for 2024
- Reduce service level to one mowing per year (June only) of pipeline areas
- Retain contractors to undertake cutting along pipeline boulevards
- Remove community BBQs from the waterfront
- No expansion to the natural ice rinks program
- Maintain current numbers of park furniture (benches, signs, tables) to reduce staff requirements associated with the fabrication and maintenance of these items
- Undertake surveys to review playground usage on older playgrounds nearing their end of useful life and, on playgrounds due for replacement where little or no use is observed, report back to Council with options for these locations for implementation in 2025

Trails Maintenance

- Close Bear Creek Eco-Park boardwalk until a Capital Budget is approved for replacement of the decking
- Defer the planned installation of small footbridges in Ardagh Bluffs
- No expansion to winter trails grooming (cross country and fat bikes) to any new locations.

It is noted that the turf/grass maintenance service levels will be maintained at the 2023 levels outlined in the above table.



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With respect to the capital expenditures, staff would recommend keeping sufficient budget to fund one(1) dump truck, one(1) UTV, one(1) Mower, and (1) trailer at a total cost of \$309,850 to be funded from Development Charge Parks and Recreation Reserve. These expenditures would be spread between 2024 and 2025.

SERVICE LEVEL REVIEW

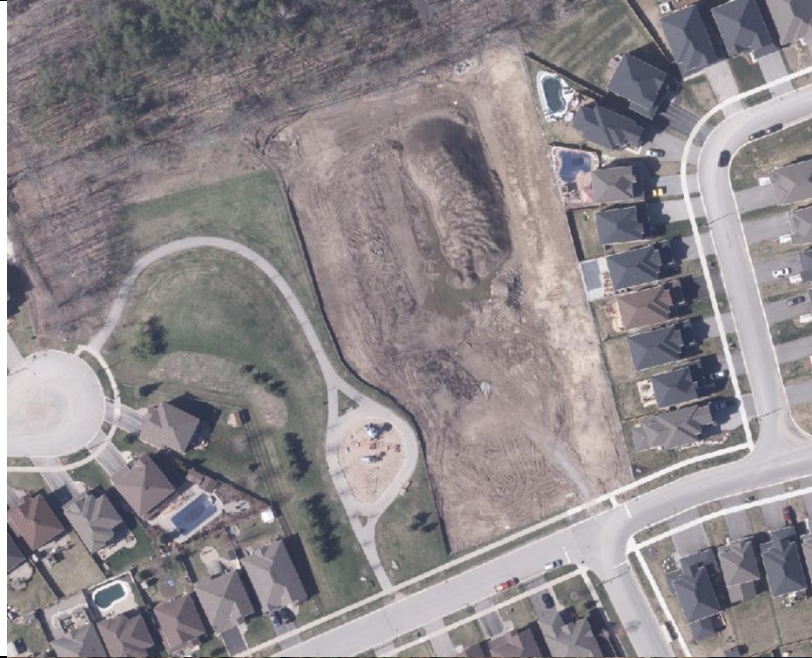
In addition to the above, and in preparation for the 2025 and future Operating Budgets, a service level review is recommended for the Parks, Forestry and Horticulture assets to assist City Council with the prioritization of services offered in relation to these assets and allow staff to develop budgets commensurate with the desired service levels.

APPENDIX "A"

Table of Park Changes Between 2018 and 2023.

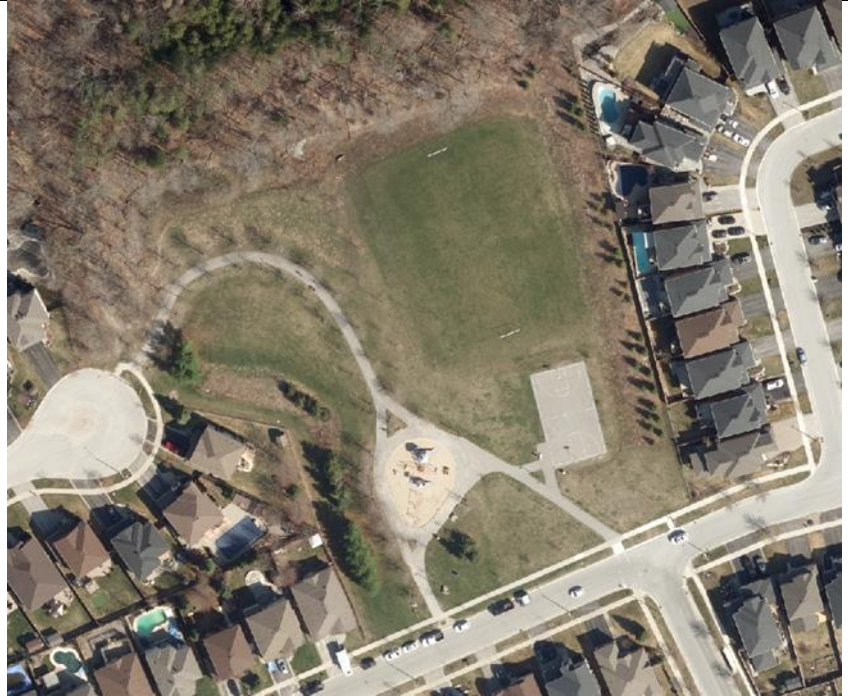
<p>Painswick Park (2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 tennis courts • 1 ball diamond • 1 soccer field • Neighbourhood playground 	
<p>Painswick Park (aerial from spring 2023 prior to the playground replacement, construction finished Sep 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 senior ball diamonds • 1 softball diamond • 12 pickleball courts • 2 tennis courts • Community sized accessible playground, largest in city. • Pavilion • Ping pong tables • Additional paved pathways 	

Loyalist Park, Phase 2
completed late 2017,
maintenance started spring
2018.



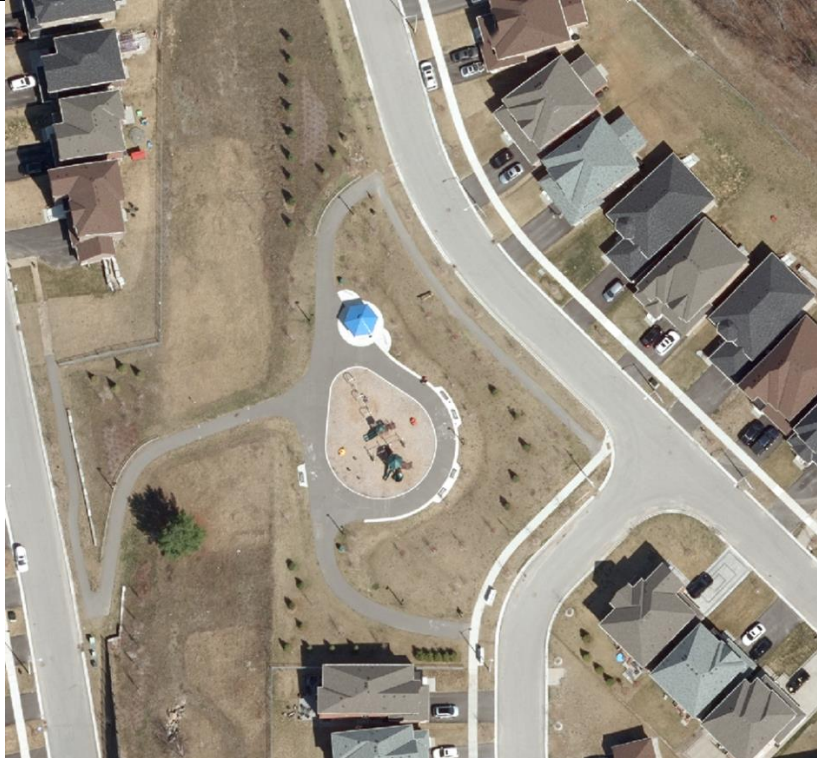
Loyalist Park (2023)
Added:

- soccer field
- basketball court



Muirfield Park

- constructed in 2022
- playground
- pavilion
- two street frontages



Gateland Park (2023)

- playground
- pavilion
- basketball court



Bear Creek Subdivision
Natural Area

- trail and woodland
- road right of way
roadside cutting
- Maintenance
assumed late 2023.
- Trail maintenance,
poison ivy control,
hazard tree
removals, signage,
trail-side cutting



St. Vincent Park Playground Upgrade

- Original neighbourhood playground structure



St. St. Vincent Park Playground (2023)

- New accessible playground
- Additional gardens
- Water play table
- Fully accessible wheelchair swing
- Pathways, retaining walls and planting features added.



Eastview Park (2019)



Eastview Park (2023)

- Added 4 pickleball courts and community garden



Tyndale Park (2019)

- Existing neighbourhood style playground
- 3,200 sq ft play area



Tyndale Park (2020)

- Added zipline
- Multiple additional structures
- Expanded play zone and playground surfacing
- 12,000 sq ft play area



Sandringham Park Playground (2020)



Sandringham Park Playground (2020)

- Added accessible surfacing and additional play area space.





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Dunlop Street	4,750 square feet of additional gardens, 118 movable planters and 64 Hanging Baskets . This is the net increase from prior garden beds, and has to be hand watered and fertilized.
Library	3 new large planting beds installed in 2023. Added as part of the reconstruction of the front entrance of the downtown library.
Event Support	Over 120 events annually, with the # increasing each year. Parks and horticulture staff support both external permitted events (e.g. Kempenfest, Winterfest) and internal staff events (e.g. Leading together, corporate events).
Trails	150km of maintained trails (up from 145 km in 2017). While this is a small increase, it is an area of traditionally low service level with only 2 seasonal staff (April to Nov) providing trails maintenance activities. A Forestry staff member is reassigned periodically to address service requests during the winter season.
Service Requests	Service requests for maintenance of park assets increased from 839 in 2018 to 1,014 in 2022 and is at 1,040 to date in 2023. Service requests from residents for repairs, garbage pick up, grass cutting, trail maintenance, signs, playground repairs, etc.