

# DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

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**Title:** Galway Village Green Community Park

**Date Prepared:** July 2, 2020

**Report To:** Committee of the Whole

**Councillor and Role:** [click on councillor/role from dropbox](#)

**Ward:** Ward 5

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## **Decision/Direction Required:**

Direction is required on the creation of a community park in Galway and on the schedule and funding to construct the park.

## **Discussion – Background and Current Status:**

Previously the developer of the Galway residential area (Galway Residential General Partnership – GRGP) presented to Council the idea of building a park in Galway that surpasses the basic requirements for green space in a residential development. While Council did not approve the park, they indicated that they were agreeable to further exploration of the idea. There is a mutual benefit to such a park as the City's residents would benefit from the addition of such an amenity for use by all City residents (not just those living in or near Galway) and the developer would presumably benefit from increased sales from having a park in the neighbourhood. As the City already provides services such as garbage collection and snow clearing in Galway, the City would also benefit from increased sales and an increased tax base in Galway.

Based on the previous discussion with Council, the developer proceeded to develop conceptual plans for the park. Attached is the concept plan for the proposed park named Galway Village Green. During the conceptual design process there was significant discussion between the developer, PERS, Public Works & Community Services to try to find a balance between the developer's vision for the park and the amenities that the City would want in such a park. This was achieved with the attached plan with the exception of two items; the performance space and the plaza area at the entrance to the park between the two future commercial buildings. Both of these items are labelled on the attached plan. Staff felt, based on experience in our other parks, that the performance space would not be used and would add unnecessary maintenance costs to the park. Staff felt the plaza area as designed is more an amenity space related to the commercial buildings and should be included with the development of that commercial space by the developer. Based on this feedback, the developer advised that the Plaza area will be slightly re-thought, but will remain as a primary parkland access location. They do not intend on changing the proposed parkland boundaries and the integration of commercial space will take place once they have identified suitable concepts and tenants. They further advised that the performance space is changed to a "social

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# ST. JOHN'S

gathering area". This space would act as a location where people would meet, congregate, and view the pond area and would include one sitting wall.

In submitting the concept plan, the developer advised that its contribution would be the 6 acres of land for the park. The developer is required to give the City 10% of land for green space / open space as part of the development. This 6 acres exceeds that minimum requirement at this point of development. Furthermore, there is benefit to having the 10% in one large area that will facilitate construction of a park. GRGP proposes that the cost to construct the park will be borne by the City as this will be a City park. The developer is open to building the park and being reimbursed by the City or having the City build the park. There may be procurement and/or legal considerations with having the developer build the park and being reimbursed by the City. The developer prepared class C cost estimates which show the total cost to develop the park estimated at \$5,185,000 (excluding resident supervision and HST). This cost was compared against historical costs the City incurred for similar work and found to be approximately 10% low. Further an additional 5% was added to cover resident supervision and additional contingency. Therefore, for budgeting purposes the cost of the park is estimated at \$5,990,000 (excluding HST). This does include the plaza and performance space which, once modified, will reduce the budget. For order of magnitude costs, this number is acceptable for discussion purposes and direction from Council.

The Parks & Open Space Fund is funded through Development Fees and is used to fund amenities throughout the City. This would be the appropriate source of funds for such a project. This the first time such a park is proposed as part of a development, however, in the past smaller parks such as tot lots, etc for smaller developments where paid for using this fund. The development fees are \$1600 per unit for residential development and \$16/m<sup>2</sup> Gross Floor Area for non-residential development. Current development fees generated or soon to be generated by Galway from approved developments and developments that are under active review but yet to receive approval total approximately \$1.1M. Development fees generated by a particular development are not required to be spent in that development. Therefore, the City could spend some of the fees generated by Galway in other areas of the City. Likewise, the City could take fees generated elsewhere and spend in Galway.

The Parks and Open Space Fund is capped at \$3,000,000 with any overages redirected to the City's general capital budget. The Open Space Fund currently has a balance of \$3,000,000 less any other projects approved in 2020 and therefore is insufficient to finance the entirety of the park at this time. If this fund is to be used, the construction of the park would have to be broken into phases. To that end, the developer has proposed Phase 1 include the accessible playground and the multi-purpose court as shown on the attached plan. Staff felt that the parking lot would also be required as part of Phase 1. The estimate for Phase 1 is \$1,538,000 (excluding HST).

It has been communicated to the developer that should Council agree to the creation of the park, the City cannot commit to a schedule as it depends on the availability of funds in any given year and Council's need to balance priorities when assigning capital funds. The developer acknowledges this and requests that Phase 1 to be constructed in 2020/21.

Under normal circumstances, staff may recommend that Phase 1 be completed as per the proposed schedule. However, given the current economic outlook and Council's ongoing review and deferral of its discretionary capital spending staff cannot recommend that at this time.

**Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. Budget/Financial Implications:  
Council consider the construction of the Galway Village Green at an overall cost of \$5,990,000 plus HST and the Phase 1 cost of \$1,538,000 plus HST.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:  
The developer – Galway Residential General Partnership  
Residents of the city as users of the park
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans:  
The decision is directly linked to two directions, namely that neighbourhoods build our City but also that the City must be financially responsible.
4. Legal or Policy Implications: Not applicable.
5. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Not Applicable
7. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.
8. Procurement Implications: Not applicable
9. Information Technology Implications:
10. Other Implications: Not applicable

**Recommendation:**

That Council

- approve the attached concept plan for the Galway Village Green Community Park;
- commit to a phased approach to build the park based on available funds and Council's spending priorities in any given year;
- refer Phase 1 for consideration for funding from the Parks & Open Space Fund in 2021.

**Prepared by: Jason Sinyard**