



Municipality of Port Hope

Staff Report

porthope.ca/agendas-and-minutes

Report Title: Lion's Park Concept Plan Post Remediation

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: September 6, 2022

Report Author:

David Smith, CAO

Department responsible:

Works & Engineering

Report Number: CAO-08-22

Recommendation:

That a resolution be presented to Council to approve the attached Landscape Restoration Concept Plan for the post remediation of the Lion's Park woodlot and immediate area.

Highlights:

- Council approved the remediation of industrial waste located on Lion's Park on May 17, 2022.
- The Landscape Restoration Concept Plan will inform the final design work to occur as the remediation efforts start.

Background:

On May 17, Council affirmed the direction given by Committee of the Whole on May 3, 2022 to remediate the industrial and low level radioactive waste situated on the Lion's Park site as per the legal agreement with the federal government (Canada). Although driven primarily by high levels of industrial waste, the project was included in the original PHAI agreement as one of five industrial site cleanups to be completed for community benefit and public health and safety.

Since the decision by Council, staff at CNL have been advancing the project by procuring relevant consultants and contractors, preparing engineering and landscape plans and obtaining the necessary Ministry permits. Consulting with the most impacted neighbors has occurred by both Municipal and CNL staff.

Discussion:

Lion's Park has long been identified for remediation as a result of high levels of industrial waste contamination located within and around the existing woodlot, generally situated to the north and east of the Lion's Park Recreation Centre. The park area has also been identified for rejuvenation investments by the municipality which have been

on hold for many years pending remediation completion. For clarity, the term 'remediation' is being used within the context of the PHAI-related waste cleanup for lands within and adjacent to the woodlot, and 'rejuvenation' is being used within the context of improvements being implemented for the remainder of the park lands.

The work being conducted on the Lion's Park site by Canada not only includes the remediation of contaminated soil but also the restoration of the woodlot and surrounding area. The primary intent of the landscape restoration component is to develop a high-quality low impact, low intensity natural open space area which incorporates landscape elements (trees, shrubs, groundcover) aimed at regenerating the forest and enhancing ecological functions. Once the remediation and landscape restoration work is complete, the newly regenerated forest will be maintained by the municipality using good forestry management practices in order to ensure its long-term health. The restoration plan also provides an opportunity to optimize quality of place and appreciation of nature for the long-term benefit of residents in the neighbourhood and community at large.

The attached Landscape Restoration Concept Plan, prepared by CNL, calls for the replacement of trees that are to be removed as part of the site remediation work, the installation of a new pathway network complete with seating areas, benches and overlooks for quiet reflection, the provision of a central gathering point with a possible gazebo or shade structure, and site signage for wayfinding and interpretive display. Some pollinator, bird and/or sensory gardens may be introduced in select areas of the remediation site for ecological and therapeutic benefit. Where practical, landscape material will be reclaimed for use within the park.

As per Council's direction, the landscape restoration plan design aligns with the goals and recommendations of the Forest Master Plan, Leisure Service Master Plan, and other strategic priorities, and will be complementary to the future rejuvenation plans for the balance of the park area.

Consultation has occurred with the neighbors most directly impacted by the remediation and landscape restoration work. As well a briefing occurred on site with some members of the PRC Advisory Committee. In the context of the rejuvenation of the balance of the Lion's Park site, the PRC Advisory Committee is active in this regard and staff will provide Council with options in accordance with the goals and recommendations of the Leisure Services Master Plan and following public and stakeholder consultations.

Council is asked to approve the attached Landscape Restoration Concept Plan (Attachment 1) for the Lion's Park remediation area. The plan is conceptual at this stage and, as CNL prepares the site for remediation this Fall, the approved Concept Plan will inform the detailed design which will be finalized over the coming months. The detailed design will incorporate feedback received from neighbours and municipal staff. As with all other PHAI projects, the detailed design as it evolves over the next number of months will not return to Council for approval but will be subject to Regulator approval and internal municipal staff approvals. Council and the public will be informed of the plan evolution through regular updates. A sample Concept Plan Work in Progress is also attached (Attachment 2) to illustrate how feedback received is and will be incorporated as the base plan evolves.

Financial Considerations:

The Lion's Park remediation and landscape restoration project is funded by the federal government as part of the PHAI legal agreement. The park rejuvenation recommendations will be considered as part of the 2023 municipal budget process.

Communication and Public Engagement:

This project has been identified for many years as part of the PHAI clean-up. Neighbours received written correspondence in 2018 and 2020 directly from CNL and the public was formally advised of the pending work and the intent of the project in March 2022. Since that time CNL has hosted a public meeting and met with citizens. Citizens have also delegated before Council, three reports have been considered by Council and the project has received extensive public attention. Additional communication and engagement in the form of newsletters, flyers, newspaper ads, and a public information session will be implemented by CNL during the month of September, prior to the commencement of the project. The site will be fenced off for public safety and on-site signage is to be posted prior to site mobilization in late September.

Conclusion:

Lion's Park is a valuable urban asset. The remediation of on-site industrial waste will improve public health and safety and reduce community stigma. The landscape restoration work will regenerate and enhance the open space area and ensure the long-term sustainability of the woodlot. Overall, the remediation and landscape restoration project will serve as the impetus for the broader rejuvenation of Lion's Park.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Landscape Restoration Concept Plan for approval.

Attachment 2 – Landscape Restoration Concept Plan Work in Progress SAMPLE