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Churchill Park Redevelopment Phase 2 – Online Public Information Centre
Online Comment Period: June 25, 2020 - July 31, 2020

Question and Answers

On June 25, 2020 an online Public Information Centre (PIC) was held by Councillor Wilson's office. Staff from Landscape Architectural Services presented a concept plan for Phase 2 walkway and rain garden work. A summary of questions, answers and related comments from the meeting were previously posted. The comment period was open for online submissions until July 31, 2020. The following is a summary of questions received during the post-meeting comment period.

Q&A:

Question 1:

1. Due to the close proximity to Cootes Paradise, it would be sensible for new plantings by the City of Hamilton be limited to only plant species native to the Cootes Paradise and the surrounding areas.

2. Access to the existing RBG trails should be maintained as a high priority. The previous loss of access to the Ginger Valley trail, near the recently naturalized soccer fields was likely a mistake.

3. The plan should consider connecting the proposed swales and ditches with curb level outlets to direct stormwater from the roadway along Parkview Dr, between Norwood Rd and Franklin Ave, towards the rain gardens, as was done during Phase 1 works. This type of green infrastructure/LID makes a lot of sense for multiple reasons and the Phase 2 works offers an opportunity to build more of it efficiently.

4. In some cases, the proposed locations of swales and rain gardens don't seem well connected with the natural drainage paths in the surrounding gullies and valleys in the forest. In particular, the large rain garden near Franklin Ave. and Parkview Dr. seems poorly connected with the natural drainage features. Please see the attached figure for further details.

5. The plan should consider reusing excavated soils on the park as much as possible, such as with raised walking paths or small hills/mounds near the forest edge. Transporting soil offsite seems like an unnecessary expense and carbon footprint.

Finally, I'd just like to say that I think the Phase 1 works were very successful and well implemented by the City.

Answer:

1. All proposed plantings are vetted by the RBG and Hamilton Conservation Authority during the Niagara Escarpment Commission's development permit application (DPA) process. We aim to plant native plant species where possible. Sometimes non-native plant species are proposed due to their suitability to the intended applications, such as the ability to withstand drought or help treat stormwater.

2. We work with the RBG to ensure trail connections are developed in accordance with their work plans and mandates. Certain trail heads have been relocated or closed off completely to promote forest regeneration. This is not done by the City of Hamilton, but by the RBG and is in accordance with their land management strategy to protect and preserve the ecosystem.

3. The proposed drainage plan aims to improve drainage within the park. Due to site constraints, there is simply not the space to deal with the capacity of stormwater from the adjacent streets without removing playing fields or implementing a solution that is exorbitantly expensive. With that said, the proposed solution has been developed to become part of a larger LID system in the future once the remaining sports fields in this area are redeveloped. The larger capacity of the rain gardens would also generate amounts of excess soils that we would not come close to being able to manage on-site.

4. We are aware of the drainage signature of the site and have proposed a solution that directs water to the LIDs while improving exiting site drainage and reducing potential erosion in areas which erosion has been observed in the past. It is true that this site and existing programming provide some constraints, so we have extensively modelled the site to ensure the proposed solution works while accommodating the paths, sports fields, existing drainage and trail heads. As you are also likely aware, we have installed several monitoring wells in this area and have used the data from the boreholes and ongoing monitoring to inform our design.

5. Wherever possible, we attempt to balance cut and fill on-site to reduce offsite removal of soils. This area of the park is so tightly constrained that installing hills and mounds will be done so in an extremely limited manner. We are conscious of our carbon footprint and if soils must be removed from site, we attempt to transport excess soils to other local City construction sites. This was done in the Phase 1 project, where we transported soils to two City construction projects in Downtown.