

# Report to Council



**Date:** February 11, 2019

**File:** 1840-20

**To:** City Manager

**From:** Sustainability Coordinator and Development Engineering Manager

**Subject:** Okanagan Rail Trail Update

Report Prepared by: Michelle Kam, City of Kelowna and Matt Vader, District of Lake Country

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Sustainability Coordinator and Development Engineering Manager, dated February 11, 2019, with respect to the Okanagan Rail Trail Update;

AND THAT Council receives, for information, the presentation from the Chair of the Okanagan Rail Trail Committee (ORTC);

AND THAT Council approves the principles of the Okanagan Rail Trail Maintenance Standards Guidelines.

AND THAT Council approves the principles of the Okanagan Rail Trail Brand Identity and logo attributes and direct City of Kelowna ORTC rep(s) to work with ORTC to finalize a logo that meets these attributes;

AND THAT Council endorse the Friends of the Okanagan Rail Trail (FORT) MOU and authorize the City of Kelowna ORTC rep(s) to execute on behalf of the City of Kelowna.

## **Purpose:**

To provide Council an update on the Okanagan Rail Trail Committee and have Council endorse joint principles that relate to the entire corridor.

## **Background:**

The Okanagan Rail Trail Committee (ORTC) was established in July 2018 by the Councils and Board of the participating jurisdictions (i.e. Okanagan Indian Band, City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country,

Regional District of North Okanagan, District of Coldstream, City of Vernon). The establishment of this committee is the function of the natural progression from acquisition (IAT Interjurisdictional Acquisition Team) to development (IDT Interjurisdictional Development Team) to coordination (ORTC Okanagan Rail Trail Committee). The ORTC is responsible for the joint coordination of activities related to the planning, development, maintenance and use of the corridor.

## **STATUS REPORT ON COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Councils and Board endorsed Terms of Reference for the Okanagan Rail Trail Committee (ORTC) and identified a number of specific responsibilities, or tasks, of the Committee. In order to properly address the breadth of tasks assigned to it, the Committee has conducted an exercise to prioritize its performance of these tasks, based on the outcome of the elected leaders' session in November 2017. The order of tasks presented in this status report is reflective of this prioritization. As tasks are successfully completed they will be recommended to the Councils/Board for consideration as appropriate.

### 1) Maintenance Standards

The jurisdictions seek a standard or level of maintenance that is common to the entire corridor. A Maintenance Standards manual has been prepared cooperatively by the owner jurisdictions (i.e. City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country and Regional District of North Okanagan), and has been reviewed and acceptance by the Committee.

The purpose of the Maintenance Standards manual is to establish a consistent standard for the physical condition, intended function and environmental quality of the Okanagan Rail Trail Corridor for the transportation, recreation and health benefits of its intended uses.

The principles of the manual include the following:

- Each owner be responsible for the funding, coordinating and execution of maintenance activities for that section of the corridor within their jurisdiction.
- Conform to these standards within the legislated parameters of the Community Charter, the Local Government Act and other applicable legislation.
- There are unique circumstances along the length of the corridor that may warrant an approach or practice that is not consistent or is different.
- Where there is a conflict between these standards and the standard or practice of an owner jurisdiction, the standard or practice to be followed shall be at the discretion of that owner jurisdiction.
- Work within the organizational capacity and financial resources available, and within the official policies of your organization.
- Plan maintenance activities so that work is completed before minor issues grow into major concerns.
- For developed park land within the corridor, follow the owner jurisdiction's maintenance and operation standard for that type of park land.
- As possible, coordinate trail maintenance activity with appropriate site conditions and least sensitive impacts to environmental values, abutting agricultural operations and adjacent land uses.
- Coordinate trans-boundary maintenance issues and activities with adjacent corridor owners to foster a consistent standard and minimize impacts to trail uses events on the corridor.

- Management personnel from the owner jurisdiction maintenance and operation departments will meet annually in the summer to discuss coordination of activities and changes or updates to these standards.
- Make changes or updates to this standard as required, on an annual basis. Changes and updates shall be approved by the Okanagan Rail Trail Committee.

## 2) Acquisition of Additional Lands

The owner jurisdictions have had specific opportunities to acquire additional sections of corridor land for the rail trail. There are two sections of recently acquired trail:

- Kelowna: Between Gordon Drive and Manhattan Drive (approx 1.5 km); also known as the Weddell Place acquisition. This section was secured from CN Rail in summer 2018 and has been constructed to the basic gravel standard that the trail was built to in the District of Lake Country and in the North Okanagan Regional District. This new section provides access from the end of the original purchase into downtown Kelowna.
- Coldstream: Between Mile 88 and College Way (approx 0.7 km). The acquisition of this section of corridor is in process. When complete it will provide access from the end of the original purchase (at CN mile marker 88) to pedestrian and bicycle facilities on College Way and Kalamalka Lake Rd. Construction of this section will begin after the acquisition is finalized.

## 3) Event Management

The Committee is working with owner and stakeholder jurisdiction staff regarding the management of events; a set of guidelines regarding event usage on the rail trail and a process for event coordination, approvals, fees, and implementation. A recommended management plan is being prepared and is scheduled to come to the owner Councils and Board for endorsement in 2019.

## 4) Addition to Reserve – IR#7 Duck Lake

The Department of Indigenous Services Canada is facilitating the transfer of corridor ownership from CN Rail to the Government of Canada and deemed the lands for the use and benefit of the Okanagan Indian Band, through the federal Addition to Reserve (ATR) process. The timing of this federal ATR process is projecting completion in late 2019 or early 2020. Construction and public use of the rail trail through IR#7 Duck Lake would not occur until after this process is complete and is also subject to OKIB affirming participation in the Rail Trail including public access to the lands.

## 5) Joint Services

Per the terms of reference, the Committee will report back to the Councils and Board with recommendations regarding the joint provision of services. Currently, based on the Committee's review, no joint provision of services is being recommended. The work to date has provided a path that coordinated standards and processes, rather than joint provision of services, and is believed to be more beneficial as it respects the decision-making responsibilities of the individual organizations, Councils and Board.

6) Third Party Access

The jurisdictions seek to have a coordinated and consistent approach in dealing with applications from third parties for access to, across or along the corridor. In order to address accesses that were in place prior to purchase of the corridor, the Committee and respective staff of the owner jurisdictions have been using a common template for crossing agreements and easements where appropriate.

7) Additional Facilities

Each owner group is undertaking planning for future facilities within their jurisdiction that will support or enhance use of the rail trail (e.g. staging areas, parking, washroom facilities, furniture, viewpoints, etc). Once these planning processes have identified locations and opportunities for potential facilities they will be reviewed by the Committee for coordination between the jurisdictions.

8) Wayfinding and Trail Etiquette Signage

The production of wayfinding and trail etiquette signs is underway. Installation of signs on completed sections of trail is scheduled for spring 2019 and a plan is in place for the installation of wayfinding and trail etiquette signs for those sections of trail that are not yet constructed, for installation when ready. The wayfinding strategy provides users with trailside wayfinding signage at key access points to the rail trail, to provide directions regarding both the trail and key destinations within each community that are accessible via the trail. The design, materials and graphic language for the wayfinding signs is consistent for all jurisdictions. Additionally, the intent is that this signage is to be used solely for the rail trail and not for other local trails that connect to the rail trail.

9) Interpretive Facilities

In addition to the donated funds they raised that enable the construction of the trail, the Okanagan Rail Trail Initiative (ORTI) raised an additional \$400,000 for an interpretive strategy to develop facilities that will focus on the natural and cultural history of the region as it relates to the surroundings along the trails route. In consultation with the Committee, a community group offshoot of ORTI has taken on the task of developing the interpretive program and implementing the initial phase of onsite and web-based interpretive program. The program ideas and content for the program are being developed in consultation with related agencies and community members with pertinent subject expertise. The program and plan for interpretive facilities is underway and is expected to come to the owner Councils and Board for information in the second quarter of 2019.

10) Branding

A consultant has been retained to work with the Committee to create a brand strategy for the rail trail corridor and to develop a logo. As part of this process a workshop was held with stakeholders in the valley who have an interest in the corridor and/or who have brand and marketing expertise relevant to the corridor (e.g. tourism agencies, university, fundraisers, local

governments). The intent is to establish consistency among all owners, partners, stakeholders and users and to create a common understanding for use on communications pieces like signage, brochures and website. The visual identity is an essential part of a planned approach to building the Rail Trail's reputation and raising awareness about its facilities, services and programs. This brand identification program will provide a unified character to create a consistent experience for users.

Attachment A, Brand Identity, outlines the brand strategy and logo attributes. With a confirmed direction, the final design for the logo and guidelines will be developed and this final product will be brought to the Councils/Board in the second quarter of 2019 for information.

#### 11) Partnerships (Friends of the Okanagan Rail Trail)

While the community fundraising team that was responsible for raising \$7.8 million in capital funding for the trail has ceased its operation (Okanagan Rail Trail Initiative - ORTI), a spin-off group of members from ORTI is establishing a "friends of" group for the rail trail; Friends of the Okanagan Rail Trail (FORT).

The Committee has worked with FORT to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for this partnership (refer to Attachment B, FORT MOU). The Friends of the Okanagan Rail Trail Society is a registered non-profit society. As it relates to this Memorandum of Understanding the Society's interests are three-fold:

- to support Trail enhancement by fundraising for amenities and improvements;
- to employ a range of communication tools to promote the Trail; and
- to support and facilitate stewardship of the Trail.

#### 12) Fundraising

As updated previously, in 2018 the owner jurisdictions (RDNO, Kelowna, Lake Country, Okanagan Indian Band) received a \$1.3 million grant from the New Building Canada Fund from the Federal Government, to be matched with \$4.1 million from donations. The Committee is working out the funding details with Infrastructure Canada and with the Central Okanagan Foundation.

More recently, the owner jurisdictions have partnered on a grant application to Destination BC led by Tourism Kelowna. If successful, Tourism Kelowna's grant to Destination BC would provide \$100,000 of value to the development of a marketing program for the entire corridor. A response to that application is expected by spring 2019.

### **COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION**

Since its establishment in July 2018, the Okanagan Rail Trail Committee has met monthly to fulfill its responsibilities. In addition to the tasks described above, the Committee was also tasked with certain administrative responsibilities and with reporting regularly to the Councils and Board of the participating jurisdictions. Updates on these items will be provided when they become pertinent to the Committee in fulfilling these responsibilities.

### Committee Chair

Andrew Gibbs, City of Kelowna, chaired the Committee from its inception in July of 2018 to the end of the 2018.

Effective January 2019, the chair of the Committee has been Matt Vader, District of Lake Country.

### Communication

As chair, Matt Vader will be the primary point of contact for the Committee and for jurisdictions responding to queries and media requests on issues related to the corridor as a whole. As it relates to issues that are geographically limited to land within their own boundaries, each jurisdiction will be responsible for handling communication issues as they arise; keeping the Committee informed as appropriate.

## **OTHER NEWS**

This section of the status report is for the sharing of information that, though it is not a mandated task of the Committee, may be of interest to the elected leaders of the rail trail corridor.

### Agricultural Land Reserve

Many sections of the rail trail pass through or are beside land designated as Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). As such, the project applied to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for a change in use, from railway to recreational trail. The ALC approved this in Lake Country and Regional District of North Okanagan, and farm fencing and signage has been installed as a condition of that approval. In Kelowna, the ALC has not provided approval for the 3.3 km section of trail that goes through Eldorado Ranch, between the Kelowna Airport and OKIB IR#7 Duck Lake. The City of Kelowna and ORTC have requested a reconsideration of this decision by the ALC and are in discussion with the ALC and the owners of the ranch in order to secure ALC approval. Construction and public use of this section of rail trail would not happen until after ALC approval is secured.

### External Interest

The rail trail project has garnered the attention of many local government jurisdictions in the province. The ability of a city, a district municipality, a regional district, an Indigenous community and community volunteers to come together to achieve what has been achieved so far, in so short of a time, is unusual in local government. The issue of inter-jurisdictional cooperation can be a challenging one and others have been keen to learn what has been done on the rail trail and, of even greater interest, how it was done. Committee members have presented or been invited to present the Okanagan Rail Trail to several different professional and local government groups to answer just those questions (e.g. BC Parks and Recreation Association, UBC Okanagan, the Land Summit, and the interior chapter of the Consulting Engineers of BC, the Planning Institute of BC and the Canadian Institute of Transportation Engineers). The shared vision, mutual trust and commitment to "get it done" shared by the elected Councils and Board is something that has inspired people from other jurisdictions to re-think how they might address their inter-jurisdictional opportunities and challenges.

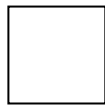
**Internal Circulation:**

Senior Project Manager  
Project Manager  
Communications Consultant  
Development Engineering Manager

Submitted by:

M. Kam, Sustainability Coordinator

**Approved for inclusion:**



Danielle Noble-Brandt, Policy & Planning Department Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A, Brand Identity
- Attachment B, Friends of the Okanagan Rail Trail MOU

cc:

ORTC Rep's  
Senior Project Manager  
Project Manager  
Urban Forestry Supervisor  
Communications Consultant  
Development Engineering Manager  
Community Planning Supervisor  
Event Development Supervisor  
Community & Neighbourhood Services Manager  
Suburban and Rural Planning Manager  
Integrated Transportation Department Manager  
Active Transportation Coordinator  
Urban Forestry Supervisor  
Parks, Beaches & Sportfields Supervisor  
Roadways Operations Supervisor  
Parks & Buildings Planning Manager  
Park and Landscape Planner  
Senior Airport Development Manager