

Report to Council



Date: July 12, 2021
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Draft 2040 OCP Future Parks Update
Department: Parks & Buildings Planning

Recommendation:

THAT, Council receives for information the Report from Parks & Buildings Planning, dated July 12, 2021, providing an update on future parkland for the draft 2040 Official Community Plan (OCP), their challenges and opportunities;

AND THAT, Council directs Staff to update the OCP based on the recommendations for parkland modifications outlined in the Report;

AND FURTHER THAT, Council endorses the OCP’s future parkland use designation inclusive of the remaining and modified parkland.

Purpose:

To provide Council with information on the Draft 2040 OCP’s future parks; feedback from the public and owners; and modifications to the OCP in response to feedback heard.

Background:

Planning for new parks in our urban areas, to support the OCP’s Growth Strategy, has been the focus of staff’s efforts to determine locations and properties that will require a future park designation. This has highlighted both opportunities and challenges that Kelowna, as a rapidly growing community, will need to address to be successful in its future vision over the next 20 years and beyond. It also recognized that delivering on future parks will need to rely more heavily on acquisition of privately owned properties than in the past.

Resolution	Date
THAT, Council receives for information the Report from Parks & Buildings Planner Specialist, dated March 9, 2020, providing an overview of the key considerations and strategies needed to deliver future parks in response to the endorsed 2040 Official Community Plan Growth Scenario.	March 9, 2020.

Discussion:

Providing new parks will enhance the livability and vibrancy of Kelowna as the city continues to grow in response to the visionary goals of Imagine Kelowna and those key principles that form the Pillars of draft 2040 OCP:

Imagine Kelowna: Providing new parks will support Imagine Kelowna's principle of 'smarter' and more 'connected' growth and the goal of creating "*healthier neighbourhoods that support a variety of households, income levels and life stages*" and "*creating great public spaces that bring people together.*"

OCP Pillars: Parks will ensure the current quality of life is maintained as Kelowna shifts development patterns away from a primarily suburban development and starts to focus development and infrastructure investment more to its Urban Centres and Core Area. Parks, as public space, offers recreational opportunities and connections to nature for all residents. Providing new parks for those neighbourhoods that will transition into higher density and more multi-family development will help to support the key principles around incorporating equity and accessibility into city building and diversity of housing.

In identifying future parks in the draft OCP, Staff had to balance the visionary goals of Imagine Kelowna and the OCP with the City's [Parkland Acquisition Guidelines](#) and the many challenges this presented while working within the financial goals of 20 Year Servicing Plan. This was anticipated in Staff's March 9, 2020 presentation to Council on [2040 OCP Parks & Open Space Strategies](#). In the Report Staff identified the cost challenge of achieving the current guideline's recommended amount of parkland acquisition within urban areas where most of future growth will occur, especially for those neighbourhood and community parks that are intended to be in close proximity and serve local area residents. An earlier assessment of local parkland across the city helped Staff to appreciate the current extent of this challenge and the need to adjust expectations moving forward under the new OCP.

Parkland Acquisition Assessment

A 2018 assessment was conducted by Staff to establish a benchmark for identifying future park needs in the 2040 OCP. The assessment focused on existing neighbourhood and community (local parks) that are key to supporting residential development. The assessment identified that all suburban areas are at, or over, the guideline's target rates for new growth. Those neighbourhoods within urban areas were all below the guideline's recommended rate. City Centre, which includes the Downtown, Capri-Landmark and Midtown, had the lowest assessment at 20%; KLO and South Pandosy at 42%; and Rutland at 71% of the current guideline targets.

While this assessment helped Staff better focus efforts, it did not exclude providing new parks outside of the Core Area and Urban Centres. Future parkland already identified in the 2030 OCP, that had yet to be acquired, was carried over and formed most of future suburban local parkland signaled in the OCP. Those new local parks signaled for the 2040 OCP were focused in urban areas.

Future Park Challenges and OCP Response

In signaling future parks in the OCP Staff had to balance a number of different challenges and demands including:

- The cost challenge of acquiring new parkland in urban areas in response to growth and the need for parks to support the transformation of existing neighbourhoods to higher density multi-

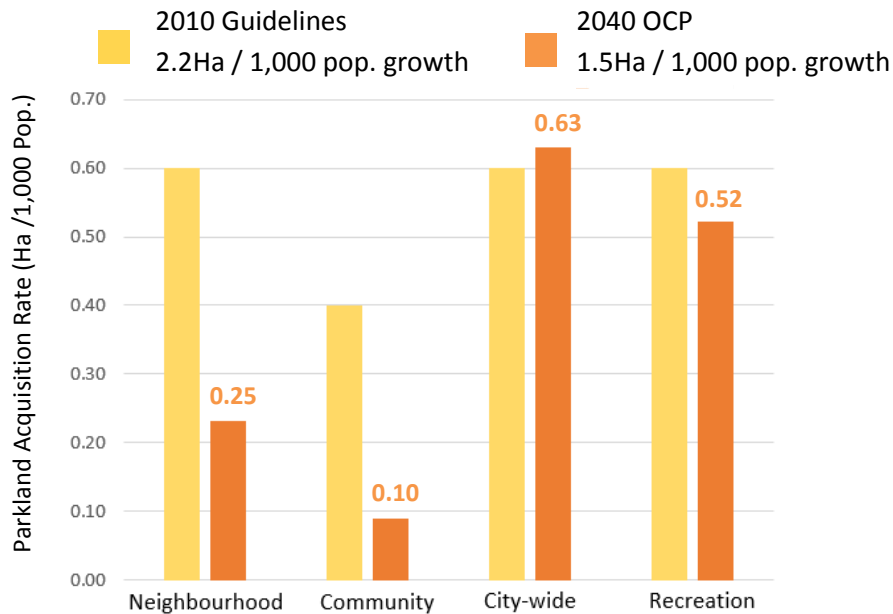
family development. Staff's response is signaling future local parks in the OCP closely aligns with the adopted growth strategy; with 66% of local parks in urban areas and 34% in suburban area. Future parkland acquisition will need to be set at a lower rate than current guidelines recommend; down from 1.0Ha per 1,000 population to a range of 0.3Ha to 0.6Ha per 1,000 population in urban areas. For equity this same range rate has been applied to suburban areas. Local parks will make up 21% of the total future parkland identified and accounts for 36% of the estimated acquisition allowance in the 20 Year Servicing Plan.

- Public demand for greater access to Okanagan Lake remains high, as all of our beach parks are over-subscribed during the summer months. Approximately 8% of the total parkland identified in the OCP has waterfront access and accounts for 42% of the estimated acquisition allowance, to City-wide parkland in suburban areas that make up 36% of the total future parkland identified and accounts for 10% of the estimated acquisition allowance in the 20 Year Servicing Plan.
compared
- Recreation Parks include high activity sports fields, recreation centres, arenas, court facilities, swimming pools and multi-recreational trails. They also represent the largest of the parks, in terms of size as well as City investment in assets, infrastructure and resources. This makes expansion a much more effective option than acquiring land and building new. The OCP signals both Mission and Rutland recreation parks for expansion into properties that are within Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Support from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to allow recreational uses on ALR property will be a challenge. Staff continues to consult with the ALC on those sites identified in the OCP. Recreation park expansion will make up approximately 35% of total future parkland identified and accounts for 12% of the estimated acquisition allowance in the 20 Year Servicing Plan.
- Aligning the timing of a property acquisition with an owner's willingness to sell and maintaining available DCC funding reserves to compete with the private sector will become a challenge as more future parks are targeted in urban areas. This highlights the importance of the OCP and the Future Land Use designation. As a Future Land Use document, the OCP needs to communicate the larger vision to the public. As a long-term planning document, the OCP provides a target for staff to work and budget toward. Parks signaled in the OCP that are designated on private properties have no guarantee on when, or if, they will be acquired. Designating properties with a 'park' future land use will ensure that any development stays within the current permitted zoning to allow time for the City to acquire properties through natural succession. Staff may consider adjusting future parks as other opportunities present themselves to achieve the same overall intent and objectives and amend the OCP accordingly.

Proposed reduction to current parkland acquisition targets

The City's current Parkland Acquisition Guidelines will need to better reflect the 2040 OCP that signals a lower overall parkland acquisition rate that is closer to 1.5Ha per one-thousand population increase; down from 2.2Ha (see Figure 1). The greatest reduction will be for Neighbourhood and Community parks. City-wide and Recreation park rates remain close to current guidelines, as these parks are intended to serve the broader community with more flexibility in where they can be located. New park strategies will need to be implemented in urban areas to offset impacts from lower parkland rates per population growth and the higher costs associated with acquiring property. New strategies, specifically targeted to meet local park challenges, will create new opportunities for providing public open spaces.

Figure 1 – Active Parkland Acquisition Rates



Parkland strategies:

As more people choose to live in urban centres, to take advantage of all services and amenities they offer, densification will continue to create a strong public demand for more intensively used park and open space. To better respond to evolving needs for more parks in urban areas new innovative strategies will need to be developed and implemented. Having these strategies in place will reduce the risks associated with relying solely on new acquisition to meet future needs for park space. These strategies will also provide opportunities for a variety of experiences that better respond to evolving demographics and tastes for how people use outdoor space. Examples of strategies that will need to be explored further and implemented as part of future planning and park development efforts include:

- Urban Parks: develop greater density of amenities in urban parks that respond to wider range of demographics and allows for more intensive use.
- Pocket Parks: incentivize, as part of future developments, small privately provided courtyards that are publicly accessible during the daytime.
- Rooftop Amenities: incentivize private development to use building rooftops as amenity space for residents.
- Rooftop Parks: develop active park uses on public building rooftops, such as parkade structures.
- Enhanced Public Realm: incentivize a higher level of design quality for streetscape and sidewalks in road ROW that creates visual interest, comfort, and safety for pedestrians and positively contributes to urban character. This is a key foundation of many of the OCP's Development Permit Design Guidelines for Urban Centres.
- Shared Spaces: for streets with low traffic volumes, develop a higher level of functional design that will allow the road ROW to be shared between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Placemaking Policies: enhance the placemaking potential of development through policies that incentivize providing more publicly accessible open space and private amenity space that will add benefit the overall development and larger community

Public and Stakeholder feedback:

The online survey that formed part of the Phase 4 OCP engagement process closed on March 31, 2021. While results from surveys such as this are qualitative in nature due to the opt-in and open methodology, general support was indicated (60 per cent very supportive, 17 per cent moderately supportive) for the overall approach to parks. Of the 13 per cent of respondents that were less supportive, the desire for more lake access, beaches, lakefront parks, and more recreation parks, ranked highest in feedback reasons for non-support.

Owner feedback:

Prior to the draft OCP being issued for public engagement, 98 letters were sent out to owners whose properties were newly designated future land use as park. This provided an opportunity for staff to respond to specific questions and concerns. A handout of the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was prepared and sent to those owners that requested to speak to Staff. (see Attachment 1).

Agricultural Land Commission support:

The Agricultural Land Commission Executive Committee (ALC) were consulted on three properties proposed for future parkland use that are located within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The commission have given their approval for the inclusion of Belgo Pond, and the expansion of Mission Recreation Park. They did not give support for the expansion of Rutland Recreation Park.

OCP Map 3.1 modifications and recommendations:

Based on the feedback received, staff is recommending making the following modification to the OCP:

Watt Beach ParkRationale:

Watt Beach Park is the only major new beach park identified in the draft OCP and comprises eight residential properties along Watt Rd, creating 1.66Ha of new park space and public beach. The beach is south-west facing, wide, generous and well suited for swimming. It is also very stable due to the gentle gradient. While beach front properties are typically expensive, these properties are very deep, and hence offer a larger area for park amenities proportionate to the value of improvements on the site, compared to other locations. These properties would also facilitate the improved use of the currently under-utilised Watt Park on the opposite side of the road. Further, with the proposed link between Walnut and Watt Roads offering close access to Pandosy Waterfront Park to the north, the three parks would offer complimentary amenities, and avoiding costly duplications. Long-term the three parks will combine to create the next legacy park approximately 4.5Ha total area with over 460m of combined waterfront; clearly creating City-wide appeal. Moreover, the close proximity to the Pandosy Urban Centre, an area of rapid growth but underserved by neighbourhood and community park amenities, will allow this park to do double duty and also function as a local park throughout the year. Finally, this legacy park will become an integral part of the popular Abbott St multi-use corridor, encouraging alternate means of accessing this major node, and encouraging broader use outside of the peak summer months.

Comments:

Owner's concerns were outlined in a letter that was included as part of an earlier report to Council on the [2040 Official Community Plan Phase 4 Engagement Results](#), dated May 31, 2021. Owners questioned Staff on the need for more parkland in the South Pandosy area. They also expressed

concerns about the level of engagement Staff conducted to determine the specific location for the park and the impact a future park will have on their property and neighbourhood.

Recommended modifications:

Staff is recommending modifying the draft OCP land use map to include only the two properties at 3132 and 3142 Watt Road at present. This will signal a future lake access that aligns with the Walnut Street property identified in the OCP for connection through to the future ATC. This will maintain the key OCP park objective of connecting Pandosy Waterfront Park to Watt Park and provide improved public access to the beach at the end of Watt Road.

Further, policy will be included within the OCP to further study and consult on the inclusion of the remaining six Watt Rd properties through the Parks Master Plan process.

University South Hilltop Park

Rationale:

The draft OCP signals a 12.75Ha future City-wide park that is comprised of three large properties at 2730, 2740 Reyn Road and the hilltop portion of 890-990 Academy Way (Aberdeen Hall Preparatory School). Staff selected this site for its natural character, hilltop aspect, panoramic views of Glenmore valley, Kelowna's downtown, Okanagan Lake and beyond. There is ready access from the existing flume and University South Park trail network that runs on either side that will connect to UBCO and Quail Ridge development to the north. This one site represents 49 per cent of the total City-wide parkland signaled in the OCP.

Comments:

Parkland adjacent to McKinley Mountain Park and McKinley Reservoir will be dedicated to the City. The amount of parkland dedication, while still to be determined, is anticipated to add significantly to the City's overall natural open space land holdings and will provide similar future viewing, trail network and passive recreational opportunities planned for University South Hilltop Park. Expansion to McKinley Mountain Park will also provide improved connectivity between existing Pinecrest Peak Park and the RDCO's Stephens Coyote Ridge Regional Park. While only a small portion of the total amount of dedicated open space would be developed for active use as a City-wide park, it would necessitate a reduction to future hilltop park signaled at University South, so as not to favor suburban over urban sites.

Recommended modifications:

Staff is recommending modifying the OCP to only include the portion of 890-990 Academy Way. This will signal a smaller future City-wide park on the highest point of the hilltop. Staff will explore opportunities for additional parkland and trail connectivity through further study and public engagement through the Parks Master Plan.

Rutland Recreation Park Expansion

Rationale:

The OCP signals a 1.8Ha property at 620-622 Hartman Road, and located within the ALR, for relocation of the community gardens and dog park that currently exists across the street at Rutland Recreation Park. This would allow for the addition of two new multi-use sport fields in their place, increasing the park's capacity by 30%. Staff selected this site for its proximity to relocated uses. The site falls within the Permanent Growth Boundary and has a current OCP future land use of S2RES. Relocation of

existing uses would occur on the northern half of the property, preserving the existing structure for complementary agricultural use.

Comments:

Staff received notification from the ALC on the OCP's proposed change to the future land use. The Executive Committee considered that this proposal could be accommodated outside of the ALR and need not be located on prime capability ALR land, with a request that it be removed from the OCP.

Recommended modifications:

Staff is recommending the removal of the future parkland designation on 620-622 Hartman Road from the draft OCP based on the ALC's Executive Committee's non-support of this use. Staff will explore opportunities for alternative sites for relocation of existing park amenities from Rutland Recreation Park in order to accommodate additional sports fields through the Parks Master Plan.

Conclusion:

Providing new parks will continue to contribute to the livability and vibrancy of Kelowna. The Report set-out the many challenges and Staff's response in designating future park sites to meet the visionary and financial goals that will direct Kelowna's growth and investment for the next 20 years. The biggest impact to parkland will be on the amount of local parks and waterfront parks that can be provided to meet future needs. Some reduction is unavoidable due to the high costs of acquiring parkland in urban areas. The OCP represent a balanced approach, albeit at a reduced parkland rate for local parks than current Parkland Acquisition Guidelines recommend, along with the opportunity to develop new strategies specifically targeted to meet the challenges in providing localized parks and residential based amenities.

The Report also provides feedback Staff heard from the public and property owners on those future parks signaled in the OCP. Staff has recommended modifications to the OCP in response to the feedback. Separate from the recommendations, Staff will continue to explore further opportunities for new parkland and strategies through a future Parks Master Plan and neighbourhood planning process and refine the OCP accordingly based on their results.

Internal Circulation:

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Considerations applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority: Local Government Act, Section 471-478
Existing Policy: 2030 Official Community Plan; Imagine Kelowna; 2019-2022 Council Priorities
Financial/Budgetary Considerations: 20 Year Servicing Plan (current).

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Submitted by:

D.James, Planner Specialist.

Approved for inclusion:



D.Edstrom, Division Director, Partnership & Investments