

Report to Council



Date: November 1, 2021

To: Council

From: City Manager

Subject: *Parks Master Plan: Our Kelowna – As We Play*
First Phase - Plan of Direction and Public Engagement

Department: Parks & Buildings Planning

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Parks and Building Planning, dated October 25, 2021, regarding the Parks Master Plan framework.

Purpose:

To provide Council with information to the development of a *Parks Master Plan: Our Kelowna - As We Play*.

Background:

The City of Kelowna is comprised of a diverse mix of topography, ecosystems and cultures. Our parks system also reflects this fact. The large variety of parks and outdoor recreation facilities found within the City have played increasingly important roles in the lives of so many of us. Our parks system possesses a multitude of health benefits, capacity to bring communities together, and the ability to revitalize our relationship with nature. This was especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic as our parks, trails and waterfront became so heavily relied upon.

Our parks system also contributes to Kelowna's unique identity and special sense-of-place by serving as public spaces for social and political interactions to take place. Parks and trails are public spaces within our community where all ages and abilities are welcome to experience outdoor leisure, enjoy physical activity or simply enjoy a respite in nature. Kelowna's unique sense of place is formed through the diversity of parks available in our system, surrounding vistas and stunning viewpoints, and all amenities therein, which people have visited and return to often. Sense-of-place is a key concept associated with good place-making, where park users become attached to spaces in some special way.

Kelowna is experiencing unprecedented growth in population and urban density. This fast growth is putting rising pressure on our parks system to deliver more and better place-making; through our programming, new and upgraded parks, and improved user experiences. Impressions previously captured in *Imagine Kelowna*, our strategic vision for the City, where public input called for great civic gathering places like parks, plazas and urban centres to be catalysts for municipal cohesion and vibrancy.

Public demand and appeal for more attractive, dynamic public parks and open spaces will continue to increase as the City grows. The Parks Master Plan will provide the necessary vision and planning framework to help Council and City staff guide Kelowna's park development over the ensuing decades.

Discussion:

The *Parks Master Plan: Our Kelowna - As We Play*, will consist of three separate phases that together will form one large and comprehensive park planning document. The phases will begin at an overall 'city-wide' scale and next reduce its focus downwards into community parks and end at the neighborhood park scales.

The first phase of the Parks Master Plan will be the ***Plan of Direction*** which includes: our vision statement; development of a wide-ranging set of objectives and goals; establishment of core value frameworks with associated measures of success; as well as a detailed inventory and analysis of the existing parks, open spaces and natural assets found throughout the City.

The second phase will be ***Strategic Moves*** and include: evaluating opportunities, challenges and needs within Kelowna's growing parks system; identification of new trends and absent park amenities or supportive resources; as well as the establishment of guiding success metrics and asset targets. The final phase will be ***Plan Adaption*** and contain: park implementation strategies featuring high-definition plans; related implementation costs; ensuing park policy recommendations; funding priorities and potential partnerships; as well as parks management and operational best practices.

The Parks Master Plan will also be structured to add supplemental appendices for relevant park trends or new topics as they emerge in future years (e.g., dog parks, naturalization, inclusive play, universal design; accessibility, climate resilience, senior age-friendly strategies, etc.).

Public Engagement

For this initial scope of work, an Engagement Plan has been crafted to develop a shared-vision for the future of public parks in Kelowna by listening and expanding the number and diversity of voices providing input on the Parks Master Plan.

The Parks Master Plan's first phase – ***Plan of Direction*** will be focused on reviewing the City's existing parks system, how it is currently being used by the community, and what are priorities for the overall parks system into the future. The public will be engaged to inform them about our master planning process and types of active parks classifications found in Kelowna; capture their broader municipal park interests; confirm all outdoor recreational trends; validate park user demands; and determine appropriate levels of parks operation and maintenance.

Over this Fall, the public will have a variety of options to give input through multiple conversations and using digital-first tool methods such as Kelowna's *Get Involved* engagement hub and include:

- i) On-line citizen surveys or downloadable home version - for families.
- ii) Self-guided discussion booklet - for user groups and sports organizations; and,
- iii) Mounted park signs with a QR code directing users to a 'lite' survey or *Get Involved* webpage.

Additionally, the public will be provided analog engagement options such as:

- iv) In-park posting boards located at four City park locations.
- v) Virtual workshops – two with invited stakeholders and one with City staff; as well as,

At the end of the first phase, the project team will create the overall vision, goals, and objectives for the parks system which will form the overall framework of the Parks Master Plan. The following phases of the project will include more in-depth analysis and engagement at a 'community-wide' scale by investigating the City's five growth areas (City Centre, South Padosy, Capri-Landmark, Rutland, and Midtown); and later, at the 'neighborhood-wide' scale to identify and graphically map gaps, opportunities, and priorities within the parks system.

Next Steps:

A summary of the Parks Master Plan's first phase – ***Plan of Direction*** will be presented to the Council in 2022. Deliverables will consist of: vision statement; guiding principles and metrics; an existing inventory of parks, open spaces and trails; and summary of engagement activities. Formal approval of said deliverables will allow the project team to advance into the second phase of the Parks Master Plan.

Internal Circulation:

Parks Operations
Active Living & Culture
Community Communications
Infrastructure
Community Planning
Policy & Planning
Real Estate
Partnerships
Active Transportation
Financial Services.

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy

Imagine Kelowna - identified several visions for the City. Relevant to this report are its principles and goals working together as a system to help the community achieve its vision: Responsible, Smarter, Collaborative, and Connected.

Council Priorities: 2019-2022 - identified six focus areas with measures to transform municipal vision into action. All focus areas are relevant to the Parks Master Plan and this report: Community Safety, Transportation and Mobility, Economic Resiliency, Social and Inclusive, Vibrant Neighborhoods and Environmental Protection.

2040 Official Community Plan (OCP) and Amendments – topics covered by the OCP are fundamental to understanding the complex trends and changes that affect long-term planning for Kelowna, as well as for its public parks system. Topics such as: Compact; Complete Communities; Transportation; Natural Environment; and, A Changing Climate will all influence the future roles, needs and types of our parks.

2040 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) – provides an overview of existing conditions along Kelowna's transportation network for walking, biking, transit and driving, as well as future conditions for these modes out to 2040. The safe and efficient connectivity of people to places is an objective of the TMP. Whereby, our parks host some of the City's most important walking and bicycling routes. The Parks Master Plan will use and work together with the TMP and Imagine Kelowna as its foundation.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Previous Council resolutions;
Legal/ Statutory Authority;
Legal/ Statutory procedural Requirements;
External Agency/ Public Comments.

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Approved for inclusion: Derek Edstrom, Divisional Director, Partnership & Investments

cc: L. Bentley, Deputy City Clerk,