

Report to Council



Date: June 20, 2022
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Mission Creek Restoration Initiative
Department: Development Planning

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Development Planning, dated June 20th, 2022, regarding the Mission Creek Restoration Initiative, including the 2022 Lower Mission Creek Habitat Conservation and Restoration Plan.

Purpose:

To update Council on the work of the Mission Creek Restoration Initiative

Background:

The Mission Creek Restoration Initiative (MCRI) is a multi-phase, multi-stakeholder partnership formed in 2002 to restore natural functions to the lower reaches of Mission Creek (Okanagan Lake to East Kelowna Road Bridge). The City of Kelowna supports this work by dedicating a staff member to participate on the coordinating committee and through financial administration of the Mission Creek Compensation Bank. Committee partners include:

- BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources
- Central Okanagan Land Trust
- City of Kelowna
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Friends of Mission Creek
- Okanagan Nation Alliance
- Regional District of Central Okanagan
- Westbank First Nation

The primary objective of the MCRI is to support fish and wildlife stocks via habitat restoration. Complementary objectives are to conserve and expand biodiversity and species at risk, to improve

flood protection, and to inspire and support community stewardship. MCRI seeks to achieve these objectives through the coordination of its partners in the following activities:

- Land acquisition
- Ecological and species-at-risk assessments
- Concept planning
- Community outreach
- Detailed engineering
- Dike setback
- Creek restoration
- Monitoring

Discussion:

As a result of the MCRI's efforts, a large-scale restoration project was completed between Casorso Rd. and Gordon Dr. which has provided important ecosystem and flood protection benefits. Ongoing effectiveness monitoring of restoration performance and structural stability has occurred to help guide future restoration. Based on a 2-year study by the Okanagan Nation Alliance, important information on design approaches, materials and equipment, costs, and timelines has been collected. The assessment of past restoration projects has helped identify reach specific issues and constraints, model design stability, and the performance of restoration strategies under a range of conditions.

This research has informed the development of the Lower Mission Creek Habitat Conservation and Restoration Plan (Attachment A). The goal of this Plan is to support efforts by the partners to:

- Conserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat
- Re-establish natural form and function
- Improve flood protection
- Build climate change resilience

The recommendations for restoration presented in the Plan are conceptual and are meant to be a starting point for future detailed project designs. The recommendations may be limited by subsurface constraints, land availability, or other elements that can only be discovered via in-depth technical feasibility studies requiring considerable investigative work.

This Plan should be considered a living document that can help initiate restoration conversations as funding and land access opportunities arise. The Plan also highlights the importance of protecting existing high-quality aquatic and riparian habitat, to avoid the need for costly future interventions to restore those ecosystem services.

Conclusion:

This Plan is a valuable tool for highlighting restoration opportunities on Mission Creek. It will be circulated to City Staff to help promote awareness and encourage taking advantage of restoration opportunities that could occur concurrently with nearby City projects.

Internal Circulation:

Parks and Buildings Planning
Park Services
Public Works

Utilities
Real Estate Services
Policy & Planning

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

2040 OCP

Policy 14.4.3. Natural Riparian Areas and Watercourses.

Preserve riparian areas and watercourses in their natural state and link them with upland natural areas to develop a connected network of natural areas throughout Kelowna.

Policy 14.4.4. Critical Habitat Restoration.

On City-owned properties, investigate opportunities to restore native ecosystems.

Policy 14.4.7. Stewardship of Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

Encourage landowners to protect, preserve, and enhance environmentally sensitive areas on private property through conservation tools such as conservation covenants, land trusts, and eco-gifting.

Policy 14.6.3. Mission Creek Aquatic Habitat Compensation Bank.

The Mission Creek Aquatic Habitat Bank may only be used to compensate for unavoidable losses to aquatic habitat. Guidelines for use of the Bank address factors including application criteria, geographical area, project priorities and costs, and method of estimating compensation contributions.

Policy 14.6.4. Compensation Bank Use.

When compensation is required to address harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat (HADD) under the federal Fisheries Act, the ability to contribute to the Mission Creek Compensation Bank as a compensation option will be at the discretion of senior government fisheries agencies.

Contribution to the Bank for non-HADD related compensation proposals will be at the discretion of the City with input from senior agencies, as needed.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Submitted by: Submitted by: J. Miles, Environmental Coordinator

Approved for inclusion:



D. Strachan, Community Planning and Development Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A - Lower Mission Creek Habitat Conservation and Restoration Plan