

Report to Council



Date: May 27, 2024
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: North End Plan – Manhattan Point Parks Update
Department: Policy & Planning and Parks & Buildings Planning

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the Report from the Policy & Planning and Parks & Buildings Planning Departments, dated May 27, 2024, with respect to outreach with affected property owners regarding the parks concept in the North End Plan;

AND THAT Council direct Staff to incorporate the park planning policy framework into the draft plan for the North End Plan.

Purpose:

To report back on outreach with affected property owners on Manhattan Point regarding the parks concept in the North End Plan, and to receive Council direction on the park planning policy framework to be incorporated in the draft plan.

Background:

On March 11, 2024 staff brought forward a report to inform Council of the process and implications of designating private property with a Park future land use in the Official Community Plan with an emphasis on Manhattan Point. Council had directed staff to produce this report following a separate report from December 4, 2023 wherein staff presented to Council a Recommendation regarding a preferred concept for the North End Plan (NEP).

Council received the March 11 report for information and directed staff to contact affected property owners regarding the park concept for the NEP and to report back to Council.

Previous Council Resolution

Resolution	Date
THAT Council receives, for information, the Report from the Policy & Planning and Parks & Buildings Planning Departments, dated March 11, 2024, with respect to parks planning on Manhattan Beach for the North End Plan;	March 11, 2024

AND THAT Council directs staff to contact affected property owners regarding the parks concept for the North End Plan and to report back to Council.

Staff have contacted and met with affected property owners regarding the park concept for the NEP and are reporting back to Council.

NEP Parks - Planning Context

Imagine Kelowna

The result of almost 4,000 resident contributions, Imagine Kelowna is a vision created by our community, for our community. One of the foundational principles of Imagine Kelowna is to “Preserve Okanagan Lake as a shared resource.” The importance of Okanagan Lake was stressed throughout the Imagine Kelowna process and two themes surfaced: we need to improve public access to the lakefront and we need to protect Okanagan Lake and its surrounding environment.



2040 OCP

Both the OCP and North End Plan recognize that the demand for parks, including waterfront parks, will only increase as Kelowna grows. The 2040 OCP parks strategy includes the objectives of waterfront access, park connectivity and park diversity. With respect to waterfront access, the OCP promotes this through *Objective 10.4: Increase Public Access to Water*.

North End Plan

The North End Plan parks proposal built upon the parks currently proposed in the 2040 OCP. With respect to Manhattan Point, 10 properties were identified as having potential to be designated as Park in order to expand waterfront park areas and add additional beach access. The properties are as noted in Figure 1. Council directed staff to contact affected property owners regarding this parks proposal. The outreach efforts and results are outlined below.

Public Engagement

Summary – North End Plan Engagement Phases 1 through 3

The desire for more waterfront park space and beach access is a persistent theme in public engagement in Kelowna, and the objective makes up a key component of the City's overall park strategy. The public engagement connected to the North End Plan has consistently reinforced this theme, with broad support for waterfront parks.

In Phase 2 of the process, a main priority on the part of participants was the addition of more waterfront parks and lake access—

Figure 1. Manhattan Point Properties for Further Outreach



with a distinct desire shown to complete the public space connection along the waterfront from Knox Mountain Park in the north through to City Park in the south. This was a key factor in including waterfront park space on Manhattan Beach in all of the NEP concept plans.

In the Phase 3 public engagement, the majority of respondents again supported the inclusion of more waterfront park space and beach access. Once again, this was a contributing factor for signaling additional park space and beach access on Manhattan Point in the recommendation for the preferred concept for the Plan.

Manhattan Point Resident Outreach

When preliminary concepts were shared with the public in 2023, residents and property owners in the North End neighbourhood were notified by mail and invited to provide comments on the three concepts via Get Involved or in person. In depth outreach with property owners of properties proposed to be designated as park in the concepts was not carried out at that time as nothing was yet being formally proposed, public engagement on the concepts had not yet occurred and the technical analysis was yet to be complete.

At Council's direction on March 18, 2024 staff hand delivered letters to property owners on Manhattan Point whose properties are proposed to be designated as park as part of the North End Plan parks concept. Where letters could not be hand delivered they were sent using Registered Mail.

The letter gave information on the NEP parks proposal, the rationale for the proposal, and the property procurement process, and invited property owners to meet with staff to discuss in greater detail, ask questions, and to have concerns addressed.

Staff spoke to or received correspondence from residents through this process in the following ways:

- Six property owners requested meetings;
- Two property owners contacted staff via telephone
- Eight property owners provided letters (some of these property owners include those who also requested meetings or telephone call)

Staff heard numerous concerns regarding the park concept for Manhattan Point. This included concern over the perceived loss of property rights, potential property devaluation, loss of privacy, reduced safety and security in the area, and environmental considerations both in the area and south at Rotary Marsh Park.

Staff responded to these concerns by way of providing accurate information about the plan, the City's property procurement policy and examples, the long-term time frame of property acquisitions for parks, property options for the present and future, the City's security programs and procedures, and the City's approach to environmental protection.

Analysis

Decisions on future land use, particularly when considering properties that a local government may wish to acquire in the future, require balancing a number of considerations, including impacts to specific property owners as well as benefits to the broader community. As part of this, existing policy, technical analysis and financial feasibility must all be considered.

Staff maintain that the inclusion of more waterfront park, beach access, and park connectivity are all important goals for Manhattan Point within the North End. However, it is acknowledged there are factors at play that warrant taking a more flexible planning approach regarding property acquisition for parks on Manhattan Point, including:

- Decisions regarding land use and the transportation network on the Mill Site that have yet to be resolved may influence decisions regarding optimal park location, orientation and connectivity on Manhattan Point. The North End Plan will respond to this by signaling flexibility for future decision making to respond to the more detailed directions that the Mill Site Area Redevelopment Plan will land.
- Given the high cost of land in the area, a more flexible planning approach with regards to property acquisitions for parks will reduce the financial pressure on the plan and increase the opportunity for overall plan success in implementation.

With these considerations in mind, staff recommend policy framework in the North End Plan that gives clear direction to explore opportunities to acquire property on Manhattan Point for parks as the opportunity arises – and in consideration of the most up to date information available regarding planning and site design in the immediate area – without designating specific properties as Park.

This approach would allow for the City to consider park acquisition at the time that an owner is ready to sell while considering available funding and the evolving context of the neighbourhood.

Next Steps

Should Council direct staff to proceed with the parks policy framework as presented, Staff will complete the draft plan with this policy framework, and return the draft plan to Council for endorsement.

Conclusion:

The creation of new waterfront parks is a priority for park and neighbourhood planning efforts in the North End and across the city. This direction is consistent with Imagine Kelowna, the Official Community Plan and the North End Plan engagement process to date.

Staff have met with property owners to understand their concerns and provide accurate information about the plan, the City's procurement policy, property options for the future, the City's security programs and procedures, and the City's approach to environmental protection. In lieu of designating specific properties as park, staff recommend a policy framework for the North End Plan that that gives clear direction to explore opportunities to acquire property on Manhattan Point for parks as the opportunity arises while considering available funding and the evolving context of the neighbourhood.

Existing Policy:

Official Community Plan

- Objective 10.1. Acquire new parks to enhance livability throughout the City.
- Objective 10.2. Ensure parks and public spaces are connected to each other and accessible for all citizens.
- Objective 10.4. Increase public access to water.

Submitted by: A. Thibeault, Planner Specialist; M. Steppuhn, Parks Planner

Approved for inclusion:



R. Miles, Long Range Policy Planning Manager