

# Report to Council



**Date:** December 4, 2017

**File:** 1840-11

**To:** City Manager

**From:** Robert Parlane, Parks & Buildings Planning Manager

**Subject:** Interim Park Access

Report Prepared by: Lindsay Clement, Park and Landscape Planner

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives for information, the report from the Parks & Buildings Planning Manager dated December 4, 2017 with respect to Interim Park Access;

AND THAT Council directs staff to develop interim access plans for 808 Manhattan Drive, Swick Road Beach Access and Bluebird Beach Park;

AND THAT Council directs staff to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with KLO Neighbourhood Association to allow them to commence fund-raising for interim access to Pandosy Waterfront Park;

AND THAT Council directs staff to exclude an off-leash dog beach as part of the Interim Park Access plan for Pandosy Waterfront Park.

## **Purpose:**

**To provide consideration for interim access to four park properties which are currently not fully accessible to the public, in advance of full development of each park.**

## **Background:**

At Council's request, the Parks Development Report, Attachment 1, was presented on May 8, 2017. The report included:

- bench marking for the current status of all undeveloped and underdeveloped parks against City targets;
- a series of report cards by park type showing planned funding for undeveloped, underdeveloped and future parks;
- alternative parks development funding options; and
- consideration of temporary, or interim, park access to City-owned parkland ahead of when full development has been budgeted. These parks were identified because they currently have

limited or no public access at present, they are waterfront properties, and they have the ability to provide significant public benefit.

This report is in response to the Council directive on the last item, to report back to a future meeting of Council with an Interim Park Access Plan for acquired parkland currently not in public use.

Further, the Off-leash Dog Beaches & Parks Community Engagement Report, Attachment 2, presented on Sept. 19, 2016, identified Cedar Avenue Beach Access (part of the future Pandosy Waterfront Park) as a potential dog beach location. The site is of reasonable size, offers a good distribution of dog beaches across the City waterfront, and received a generally favourable, although limited, public response. This report also follows Council's directive to consider the implications of including an off-leash dog beach and additional parking in relation to the long-term comprehensive Pandosy Waterfront plan. This consideration has been included in this report, and is not recommended to proceed with a dog beach at Cedar Avenue Beach access at this time.

### **Interim Park Usage**

The City has many undeveloped park sites which currently function as accessible fallow or natural areas. While some issues do arise, the sites provide some limited community benefit but lack the amenities normally associated with an active, programmable park.

Occasionally, temporary community amenities are added to these undeveloped sites: community gardens, off-leash dog parks and parking are the most common examples. However, it is recognized, once a temporary use is introduced to a location it typically becomes a permanent expectation. This can create challenges when the park is developed, if the short-term use is not in line with the park master plan goals.

Further, park sites awaiting development can be perceived as available for use by various sport and community interest groups. The proposed alternative use for the site may however, conflict with the carefully considered long-term master plan. While the City does explore partnerships with community groups, the challenge is always to strike a balance between providing a reduction in taxation expenditures in the way of partnership funding, and social equity and the long-term plans for the park site.

Some undeveloped park sites or newly acquired properties are not made available for public use. Existing properties are either retained and leased with limited maintenance, or, if unsafe, demolished and the site fenced. The sites remain inaccessible to the public until funding is available for the full park development. A significant concern is that undeveloped land in residential neighbourhoods, particularly those lands proximate to the waterfront, may attract campfires, vandalism or other undesirable activities.

There have been increasing requests for undeveloped park sites, specifically waterfront, to be made available for public access. This report considers four such sites:

- 808 Manhattan Drive
- Swick Road Beach Access
- Bluebird Waterfront Park
- Pandosy Waterfront Park

Each proposal takes into consideration security and safety concerns, avoids temporary uses that will compromise the long-term planning of the park.

### **808 Manhattan Drive**

Identified by staff for consideration, this location has also received requests from local residents to be made accessible. The site is immediately adjacent to Tolko Mill and has a long, tall, industrial façade along the east boundary. The proximity to the working tugs for the mill makes it inappropriate for swimming. However, the site includes a beautiful sandy beach facing northwest, which local residents have enjoyed over the years, until the site was recently closed.

Historically the site has been accessible, but has attracted undesirable behaviour. In collaboration with Tolko the site was closed, and the parking is currently used by Tolko staff.

Staff are recommending interim access for this location be considered for funding to clean, provide basic amenities (bench, waste bins, signage). If the site is opened as a formalized beach access, there will be more eyes on the park as well as surveillance from City Bylaw. Staff are proposing to evaluate the success of the beach access once it has been open for a summer.

### **Swick Road Beach Access**

This is a quiet waterfront site at south end of the City. With relatively simple provision of fencing and signage public access can be encouraged.

Staff are recommending interim access for this location be considered for funding.

### **Bluebird Beach Park**

The 2.9 acre site, which has a spacious and beautiful beach well-suited for swimming and paddling, was acquired in 2016.

To date there has been no public consultation on the long-term plan for the site, and funding has not been identified in the 2030 Infrastructure Plan. The interim access plan therefore intentionally proposes only minimal intervention. The existing natural state of the space is preserved with all the existing ponderosa pines retained. As part of the land acquisition, low level vegetation along the street edge has been thinned out, in order to open up sightlines and discourage undesirable behavior, and hazard trees have been removed to provide a safe environment for the public. Pathways within the natural grassland are proposed as compacted earth or compacted aggregate, and log seating may be added to the beach.

Due to the significant community benefit for limited cost, staff are recommending interim access for this location be considered for funding.

### **Pandosy Waterfront Park**

There are three primary drivers for considering this location for interim access: staff identified the location for review, the location was identified in the Off-leash Dog Beaches & Parks Community Engagement Report in 2016 for further consideration, and the KLO Neighbourhood Association (KLONA) independently approached the City wishing to fundraise in order to create access to the waterfront in advance of the full park development.

Following the acquisition of the waterfront properties, public engagement was carried out in 2014. It identified several key aspects for the park design:

- The park was identified as the primary waterfront for Pandosy village, and both the physical and visual link down Cedar Ave. was a central tenet of the scheme.
- The park was seen to be urban in nature, maintaining the urban vibe of Pandosy village.
- The waterfront was envisioned as a natural vegetated water's edge. The water quality is variable, and therefore not well suited as a swimming beach.
- The park was identified to be well suited as a focus for paddle sports in Kelowna. A paddle centre would provide animation and vitality to the park, and is in keeping with the urban vibe.
- A larger mixed use development on a consolidated site adjacent to property currently owned by the City could allow parts of Walnut St. and Cedar Ave. to be pedestrianized, thereby increasing the effective park area.

A dog park/beach was included in the internal parks planning at the time, as it provided further benefit of day-long, year-round eyes and ears on the park. However, it was not originally tested within the concept development for Pandosy Waterfront Park.

The 2014 public consultation also identified an unwillingness to commercialize, or sell off, any of the acquired land in order to fund park development. The \$2.2 million of funding from taxation for various park improvements was subsequently identified in the 2030 Infrastructure Plan for 2026/27.

Subsequently, a previously occupied home and garage has been converted for use by the Kelowna Paddle Centre (KPC). Since moving into this location KPC has seen significant growth in numbers, hosts numerous competitions, and successfully runs numerous school and youth programs. Kelowna has rapidly become recognized as one of the leading centres in the North American paddling community. KPC is however, concealed behind two fence lines, significantly reducing its' public presence in the Okanagan.

The various city-owned waterfront properties, while habitable, have received limited funding for renovations, given their scheduled demolition within the next decade. Any improvements to the properties has been limited to key repairs necessary to ensure their continued availability on an interim residential basis.

Recognizing the competing demands for park development funding across the city, the KLONA Neighbourhood Association (KLONA) approached the City to begin fundraising for an interim solution for this park. Their goals are primarily: to open up the entire foreshore for public access, to see the demolition of all seven City-owned rental properties, and to open up access to and from the KPC, which they recognize as adding significant interest and animation to the Pandosy neighbourhood.

#### Options for planning of build out:

**Full Interim Plan** - The proposed full interim access plan, Attachment 3, proposes to demolish all seven properties on the site to accommodate an area for riparian corridor restoration, pathway system, open grassed areas, and future amenities as outlined in the master plan. Care will be taken to preserve any significant mature trees on site. Some parking is provided off Cedar Ave. in the centre of the park. This is primarily envisioned for accessible parking and private paddle craft drop off.

Storage and maneuvering of the boats at the KPC, particularly the large six-person outrigger canoes, requires additional space. The interim plan would seek to work with the KPC to rationalize and condense the storage layouts, and pull the security fencing back from the waters' edge. This allows public access to the waterfront (similar to the model at COSBA in the Lower Mission). Although this has been discussed with the KPC, and they are in favour of this plan as it increases public awareness, and also allows the youth classes and competition events to spill into the adjacent park area when needed, an amendment to the existing lease agreement would be required.

The estimated cost of construction for the full interim access plan, including the demolition of all seven houses, is \$1.7 million. There are other significant park development projects identified in the 2030 Infrastructure Plan that are higher priority for the City than interim access to this park. Staff will therefore be proposing KLONA will be responsible for fund raising 100 percent of the costs required, since the original concept plan was developed in partnership with the association with the understanding that there would be no room in the capital budget until 2026/27, and accelerating the development of this park could have a significant impact on other planned priorities. KLONA believe the fund-raising potential for interim access with the demolition of all seven houses is significant. Staff recommend a Memorandum of Understanding and fundraising plan be prepared with KLONA, in order for them to proceed, and once successful, a proposal to proceed with construction be submitted to Council for consideration. No financial commitment by the City for the capital works is proposed, however there will be ongoing operations and maintenance impacts, as well as staff providing public engagement and communications support to the project.

***Partial Interim Plan*** - Acknowledging this is a substantial fundraising target, a partial interim access plan has also been prepared, Attachment 4. This retains the three residential properties to the south. These were the properties that received the most significant renovations in recent years. The south and west fence lines of these properties would be modified to create additional parking and pedestrian access along the waterfront. Provided that there is adequate room between the remaining properties and the high water mark, the scope of work will include riparian restoration along the length of the park's shoreline. However, the formal pathway, open lawn, planting and street trees have been omitted from this plan. The reduced scope of work results in an estimated construction cost of **\$995,000**.

This partial interim access plan provides both parties with a 'fall back' solution should sufficient fundraising for the full plan not be achieved.

***Off-leash Dog Beach*** - While this location would further improve the distribution of dog beaches across the city, and anecdotally, the other dog beaches recently created are proving popular, staff are recommending we do not proceed with an off-leash dog beach at this location at this time. The concept was also never tested during the public consultation for the park design in 2014 and it was considered unreasonable to burden the fundraising efforts with this additional component. Staff may consider the potential for an off-leash dog beach at this location in the future.

***Full Development Masterplan*** – Both interim plans are coordinated with the current proposed layouts for the long-term full development of the park, Attachment 5. This is to maximize the benefit of the two stage approach and minimize any wasted resources from redundant work. It also avoids establishing any temporary components or park uses, that then become long-term expectations requiring a change to the full development masterplan. The estimated cost of the full development masterplan is \$6.2 million. This includes approximately \$1 million for frontage improvements along Abbott, Cedar and Walnut, but this does not include the relocation of the Paddle Centre, nor the

relocation of the existing lift station. There is currently \$2.2 million identified in the 2030 Infrastructure Plan in 2026/27.

#### **Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

##### *808 Manhattan Drive, Swick Road Beach Access and Bluebird Beach Park*

|                                                           |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Estimated capital costs, fencing, signage, benches, etc.: | \$115,000 |
| Estimated operating and maintenance costs:                | \$20,000  |

##### *Pandosy Waterfront Park*

|                                                                      |                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Full interim park access construction costs (KLONA fund-raising):    | \$1.7 million             |
| Loss of annual rental revenue for seven properties (9 years):        | \$175,000/ann. = \$1.57m  |
| Less estimated maintenance costs, property tax, etc. (9 years):      | \$75,000/ann. = \$675,000 |
| Partial interim park access construction costs (KLONA fund-raising): | \$995,000                 |
| Loss of annual rental revenue for four properties (9 years):         | \$118,000/ann. = \$1.42m  |
| Less estimated maintenance costs, property tax, etc. (9 years):      | \$50,000/ann. = \$450,000 |

Operating and maintenance budget proposals for either interim option would be calculated and submitted for budget consideration once the fundraising has been completed.

#### **Internal Circulation:**

Deputy City Manager  
Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture  
Divisional Director, Community Planning & Strategic Investments  
Divisional Director, Financial Services  
Divisional Director, Infrastructure  
Director Strategic Investments  
Community & Neighbourhood Services Manager  
Community Communications Manager  
Grants & Partnerships Manager  
Infrastructure Operations Department Manager  
Parks Services Manager  
Property Management Manager  
Strategic Land Development Manager

#### **Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Communications Comments:  
Existing Policy:  
Legal/Statutory Authority:  
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:  
Personnel Implications:

#### **Submitted by:**

R. Parlane, Parks & Buildings Planning Manager

Approved for inclusion:



**A. Newcombe, Infrastructure Divisional Director**

**Attachment 1 – Parks Development Report**  
**Attachment 2 – Off-leash Dog Beaches & Parks Community Engagement Report**  
**Attachment 3 – Full Interim Access Plan**  
**Attachment 4 – Partial Interim Access Plan**  
**Attachment 5 – Full Development Masterplan**  
**Attachment 6 - Interim Park Access Presentation**

cc: Divisional Director, Infrastructure  
Divisional Director, Community Planning & Strategic Investments  
Divisional Director, Financial Services  
Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture  
Director Strategic Investments  
Deputy City Manager  
Strategic Land Development Manager  
Community Communications Manager  
Community & Neighbourhood Services Manager  
Partnership Manager  
Sponsorship & Advertising Manager  
Infrastructure Operations Department Manager  
Property Management Manager  
Parks Services Manager  
City Clerk