Governance & Services Committee

TO: Governance and Services Committee

FROM: Murray Kopp
             Director of Parks Services

DATE: September 2, 2020

SUBJECT: 2019 Regional Parks Service Review

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the 2019 Regional Parks Service Program Review.

Executive Summary:

In accordance with the Board's Service Establishment Bylaw Review Schedule, staff were directed to undertake a service review of the RDCO's Regional Parks service program. The key steps taken to assess service efficiency included:

- Identifying and assessing costs and cost drivers of current practices;
- Reviewing and assessing services, activities and methods;
- Analysing and comparing service benchmarks and measures, and
- Assessing against other relevant information

The scope of the study focused on four major areas of service delivery which included:

1. Parks Services Administration (PSA)
2. Community Relations & Visitor Services (CRVS)
3. Planning & Capital Development (PCD), and
4. Parks & Resource Operations (PRO)

The 2019 Regional Parks Service Review report identifies two (2) strategic service level recommendations for the Board's consideration and further identifies ten (10) operational / administrative recommendations that have been considered and are supported by the RDCO's Chief Administrative Officer.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Governance and Services Committee recommend that the Regional Board receive the 2019 Regional Parks Service Review report for information;

AND FURTHER THAT it is recommended the Regional Board approves:
- Ending annual funding of $39,000 to the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society at the end of 2020,
- Direct staff to develop an updated Regional Parkland Acquisition Strategy in 2020 to present to the Board for consideration.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved for Committee's Consideration

Murray Kopp
Director - Parks Service

Brian Reardon, CAO

Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan: The 2019 Regional Parks Service Review addressed the following priorities in the RDCO 2015 – 2018 Strategic Priorities Plan:

- Provide Proactive and Responsive Governance
- Ensure Asset, Service and Financial Sustainability
- Protect and Promote Our Environment and Lifestyle
- Champion Communications and Engagement
- Empower our Employees

General: The 2019 Regional Parks Service Review identifies and makes recommendation on the range of options for alternative service delivery models, including their pros, cons, and implications. The 2019 service review further provides advice on the most effective delivery and planning model to determine the best balance of regional parks services offered.

Financial: The 2019 Regional Parks Service Review identifies several areas for exploration that could result in service efficiency gains from implementing alternative models.

Legal/Statutory Authority: The delivery of the Regional Parks service and associated programming and services follows the Letters Patent for the Regional District.

Background:

In accordance with the Board's Service Establishment Bylaw Review Schedule, staff were directed by the Board to undertake a 2019 service review of the RDCO's Regional Parks service program.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan's Regional Park system is composed of 30 regional parks totalling over 2100 hectares of parkland. Over 845,000 people visited regional parks in 2018. Regional parks provide outdoor recreational experiences, conserve regionally important natural landscapes, and contribute to the ecological health of the region. In addition, environmental stewardship is fostered through programming in the parks.

Regional Parks serve the region.   They provide access to nature close to home in an increasingly urban region.   They provide a 'system' that spans administrative boundaries and through infrastructure and programming responds to regional recreation needs and trends and conservation priorities. They tend to be larger than municipal community parks, centered on more rustic, trail focused infrastructure that supports both day use and overnight outdoor recreation. Regional Parks programming is focused on connecting people with nature and builds on the four strategic directions identified in the 2018 "Parks for All: An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community" (Collaborate, Connect, Conserve and Lead).

The key steps to assess service efficiency as part of the 2019 Regional Parks Service Review included:

- Identifying and assessing costs and cost drivers of current practices;
- Reviewing and assessing services, activities and methods;
- Analysing and comparing service benchmarks and measures, and
- Assessing against other relevant information.

The specific goals for the 2019 Regional Parks Service Review included:

- Identify and make recommendation on the range of options for alternative service delivery models, including their pros, cons, and implications.
- Identify any service efficiency gains that could result from implementing alternative models.
- Provide advice on the most effective delivery and planning model to determine the best balance of regional parks services offered.

The scope of the study focused on four major areas of service delivery which included:

1. Parks Services Administration (PSA)
2. Community Relations & Visitor Services (CRVS)
3. Planning & Capital Development (PCD), and
4. Parks & Resource Operations (PRO)

RDCO Parks Services Department staff completed the 2019 Regional Parks Service Review based on a foundational principle that regional parks are an integral and essential component of the park and protected areas system in the region that complement municipal and provincial parks and significantly contribute in support of the RDCO's Board 2019 priority interests related to Transportation and Mobility, Sustainable Communities, Economic Development and the Environment.

The 2019 Regional Parks Service Review report identifies two (2) strategic service level recommendations for the RDCO Board's consideration and further identifies ten (10) operational / administrative recommendations that have been considered and are supported by the RDCO's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

Alternative Recommendation:

None recommended.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

- Organizational Issues
- External Implications
- Alternative Recommendation

Attachment(s):

- 2019 Regional Parks Service Review Report