



Governance & Services Committee

TO: Governance and Services Committee

FROM: Murray Kopp
Director of Parks Services

DATE: June 23, 2021

SUBJECT: Mission Creek Regional Park Management Plan

Purpose: To seek Regional Board approval for the Mission Creek Regional Park Management Plan dated June 2021.

Executive Summary:

In 2019, the Regional District contracted BENCH Site Design to prepare an updated management plan for Mission Creek Regional Park. The management plan was developed to provide the long term vision and guidance for future park development and management that reflects the current strategic priorities of the Regional Board and the future park vision, goals, challenges and opportunities over the next 20 years.

The Park Management Plan includes:

- Park management zones and carrying capacities
- A conceptual park development plan
- Park management goals and recommendations
- A 20-year phased implementation plan

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Governance and Services Committee recommends the Regional Board approve the Mission Creek Regional Park Management Plan dated June 2021.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Murray Kopp".

Murray Kopp, Director – Parks Services

Approved for Committee's Consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jodie Foster".

Jodie Foster, Director,
Communication & Information Services

Prepared by: Sandy Mah, Parks Planner

Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan:	The management plan meets the strategic priorities of the Regional Board for Environment – supports connecting with nature and adaptation to climate change. Transportation and Mobility – provides critical connections to other parks and urban neighbourhoods and supports Active Transportation corridors in the Okanagan. Economic Development – making our region more liveable and supports businesses and the economy.
General:	The management plan will provide long term guidance and prioritize the fiscal needs to manage the regional park over the next 20 years.
Organizational:	The implementation of the management plan will provide logical and informed direction on park resources so solid decisions can be made regarding park resources and service levels. It is expected that current service levels and resources upon completion of East Park Area will be minimally affected.
Financial:	The management plan is consistent with the 2021 – 2025 Regional District Five Year Financial Plan and will provide guidance towards the development of future financial plans.
Policy:	Official Regional Parks Plan, Bylaw No. 884.

Background:

Mission Creek Regional Park is one of the most popular and highly utilized parks in the RDCO's network of 30 regional parks. The 92-hectare park is located in the heart of the City of Kelowna and draws visitors from across the entire Central Okanagan and regions beyond. The park's manicured turf areas, trails and natural open spaces, playground, picnic shelter and park visitor programs offer a diverse range of recreational experiences for people of all ages and abilities.

With the increasing population growth, by 2040, the Central Okanagan population is expected to increase by 38% to 227,000 people. The population growth will present challenges and opportunities for the development and overall management of Mission Creek Regional Park.

In 2019 - 2021, an updated Mission Creek Regional Park management plan was prepared by BENCH Site Design to provide the long term guidance on the future park development and management over the next 20 years. The new management plan was developed to better align and reflects the current strategic priorities of the Regional Board and the future park vision, goals, challenges and opportunities over the next 20 years.

Mission Creek Regional Park Vision Statement

The park's Vision Statement reads as follows:

Mission Creek Regional Park is a natural sanctuary in the heart of the Central Okanagan, a historical gathering place that connects people with nature, culture, outdoor recreation, and community while conserving the unique ecological values of our region. The park showcases a commitment towards the protection of ecological spaces, the delivery of nature education and interpretation programs, and place for outdoor experiences. This is

an inclusive and accessible place where current and future generations of people will gather.

Public Engagement

As part of the management plan process, an extensive public and stakeholder engagement process was carried out in 2019 – 2020 to:

- Develop the management plan
- For the conceptual / park design and redevelopment of the Mission Creek Regional Park East Park Area (East Park Area), adjacent to Springfield Road and Leckie Road.

Public engagement for the Park Management Plan began in September 2019 at the Kikinee Festival in Mission Creek Regional Park. Community stakeholders and Westbank First Nations(WFN) were consulted at the beginning of the planning process. A draft park concept plan was presented to the public at an open house where participants could provide feedback in-person or by completing an online survey in December 2019. Input received from the public, stakeholders and Westbank First Nation throughout this process guided the development of this management plan.

East Park Area

The East Park Area was an under-utilized section of Mission Creek Regional Park that had been identified in 2019 as a planning and capital development project and was approved in the Regional Board 5 Year Financial Plan (2020 - 2024). The East Park Area provides an opportunity to redevelop open space to accommodate and disperse park users over a larger area. The redevelopment meets the demands of an increasing number of park visitors and will provide additional recreational amenities, trail improvements, new natural play structures, and wooden foot bridges.

As a result of the public consultation and subsequent budget planning, the Regional District issued a contract this past winter to complete the first phase of the East Park Area. The project is nearing completion and will soon be open for public use, meeting a long term need, addressing long term operational issues and providing critical connections between active transportation routes and the Mission Creek Greenway Regional Park. The East Park Area will be a much needed alternate public site to allow asset renewal to occur in other portions of the park as identified in the management plan.

Mission Creek Park Management Plan

The purpose of a Regional Park Management Plan, as detailed by the Official Regional Park Plan (Bylaw 884) (2000) is to prioritize and direct park development and programming, funding and maintenance, visitor uses, resource protection and park management strategies.

Broadly, the management plan addresses the key areas of environment, conservation, recreation, accessibility, stewardship, education and interpretation, and human safety and security. Challenges and goals are identified for each of these key areas and direction on how the goals may be accomplished are provided for the entire park or by development areas including:

- Area A. East park redesign
- Area B. Gathering & education place
- Area C. Cottonwood forest conservation
- Area D. Sutherland Hills educational zone

- Area E. Hall Road parking area
- Area F. Fishing Pond improvements
- Area G. Uplands walking area
- Area H. Streamside walking loop
- Area I. Cliffside erosion control area
- Area J. New greenway connection
- Area K. Off-leash dog trail
- Area L East arm conservation area

This plan estimates that about \$3 million in capital park development and asset renewal costs are projected to occur over the 20-year period. The implementation of some of these projects will be completed in joint effort with our partners such as Westbank First Nation and Community Recreation Initiatives Society.

In addition to work in the East Park Area as described above, the park management plan identifies other proposed capital development priorities for the first phase (Year 1 to 5) of the implementation plan, which include: (1) park trail improvements and wayfinding signage, (2) new picnic shelter, (3) new washroom facilities (4) developing a cultural/historical node or gathering place to replace the existing plaza, and (5) additional park furnishings.

In conclusion, the 20-year park management plan will provide the long term vision and direction for future park development and management. It will help the RDCO meet the growing challenges and public expectations for more recreational amenities, increase access to developed park spaces, and maintain service levels. Mission Creek Regional Park continues to be a special gathering place for all people and visitors to enjoy and experience nature, now and into the future.

Financial Considerations:

The management plan will provide the overall vision and a 20-year implementation plan to guide the future development priorities, capital and operational needs for consideration as part of the development of future Regional District 5 Year Financial Plans.

Alternative Recommendation:

THAT the Governance and Services Committee recommends the Regional Board receives the Mission Creek Regional Park Management Plan dated June 2021.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

- *Organizational Issues*
- *Legal/Statutory Authority*
- *External Implications*

Attachment(s):

- Mission Creek Regional Park Management Plan, June 2021