

September 25, 2017
Our File: 12-6100-20/92057/1
Doc #: 2711750.v4

To: City Manager
From: General Manager Parks, Recreation & Culture Services

Subject: **Blue Mountain Park Plan**

For: **Council-in-Committee**

Recommendation:

That the Committee receive the report from the General Manager Parks, Recreation & Culture Services dated September 25, 2017 entitled “Blue Mountain Park Plan” for information.

Report Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with information and seek feedback on the proposed Blue Mountain Park Plan development process.

Strategic Goal:

The initiative presented in this report supports the City’s Corporate Strategic Goal of “Increasing Active Participation and Creativity” and “Enhancing Sustainability of City Services and Infrastructure”. Should Committee support to proceed, staff intends to include this project for consideration in the 2018 Business Plan as a “B” Priority.

Background:

Blue Mountain Park is a 19.9 acre (8 hectare) community level park located in the Austin Heights neighbourhood that predominantly services Southwest Coquitlam (Attachment 1). The park is one of the most popular park destinations within the City with a rich community history.

The existing park provides a broad variety of recreational services and amenities including the baseball diamond with a natural grass field, playground, wading pool, water spray area, three picnic shelters, three tennis courts, memorial cenotaph, and a variety of passive trails with a number of art installations (Attachment 2). Many of the original amenities date back to the 1960’s with various additions, changes, and improvements made to the park since then. Most recently, in the last 5 years the playground and the picnic shelters have been replaced.

The various park additions and improvements over the past 40+ years have established a functional park, but there is no consistent theme or holistic vision for the park as amenities have been added incrementally at different times. There are also a variety of park asset buildings and site amenities that are in need of replacement and/or nearing their life span, including the Blue Mountain Park Washroom/Concession building which was built around 1965 and the Scout Hall built around 1960. Both of these buildings were identified by staff in

a recent Council-in-Committee facility assets management report on July 10, 2017 as buildings at end of life and in need of replacement.

In 2014, the Fraser Health Authority requested that resurfacing of the deck around the water spray park to address historical deterioration and to repair trip hazards resulting from the tree roots that were causing cracks and raising the existing deck surface at that time. In response to this request, the Blue Mountain Water Spray Park deck was resurfaced for \$43,000 in 2015. This improvement was also intended to extend the life of the spray park pending the revised aquatic strategy, as noted below, however it was noted at the time that the resurfacing would only provide about a 5 year extension and that replacement and expansion of this water feature needs to take place. The original wading pool was built around 1960 and the water spray park deck in 1992. Both amenities are at the end of their life cycle and are in need of replacement.

The Aquatic Service & Infrastructure Strategy (2015-2040) has now been completed and approved by Council, as well as future projects and actions incorporated into the PRC Master Plan. The Strategy calls for the creation of a “community level enhanced spray deck” in the park by 2020 with the capacity to service the catchment area of 30,000 to 80,000 residents with the primary goal of providing respite from summer heat and water orientation for toddlers. The Strategy further recommends to “phase out the one remaining wading pool at Blue Mountain Park after the enhanced spray deck is completed.” The Strategy defines spray decks as water play amenities that “have little or no standing water, in an outdoor environment, and does not require a Pool Operating Certificate under the BC Pool Regulations”.

Along with the need to address aging infrastructure and buildings, recent service reviews in various areas of Parks, Recreation and Culture have informed the need to elevate Blue Mountain Park as a priority for the development of a new plan for this key community park. As well, the recent removal of the moratorium in the Austin Height Neighbourhood Plan would also suggest that redevelopment of this key park is timely to ensure that future growth in this neighbourhood can be accommodated with renewed and expanded park amenities.

Also relevant, the draft Tennis and Pickleball Services and Facilities Strategy highlights actions needed in Blue Mountain Park tennis courts. In the short term, the Strategy recommends that the three existing tennis courts should be colour coated and re-lined for tennis in the park by 2021. In the long-term, this Strategy proposes the potential for adding 1 or 2 additional courts by 2036. Considerations should also be given to a possibility of lighting the courts as they are currently not lit and this would extend public use.

Discussion/Analysis:

Blue Mountain Park requires needs to be evaluated to examine existing assets and develop a park redevelopment strategy with an accompanying park asset replacement plan focusing on amenities that require most urgent attention such as the water spray deck, wading pool, washroom building, and Scout Hall.

Staff therefore proposes to initiate the preparation of the Blue Mountain Park Plan in 2018 with the help of professional consultants and with thorough consultation with the community. The plan would focus on all of the amenities outside of the sport field as all field amenities are currently considered as part of the Coquitlam Sports Field Strategy 2013-2023.

It is anticipated that some of the more immediate requirements will include those related to supporting aquatics such as the water spray pad and the wading pool. Synergies and efficiencies may be found as part of the planning process that will explore combining the functions of several buildings in order to offer a washroom, concession, multi-purpose space(s), and the spray pad mechanical systems within a single centrally located building. The pathway system and the park layout will also be reviewed. Modifications to the central lawn area may be required as it currently does not drain well creating swampy conditions during heavy rainfall periods. Other existing park assets and amenities will be evaluated as part of this Plan, including the cenotaph, which has been the subject of historical reviews but without the benefit of being coordinated with the rest of the park assets and amenities.

Process

The Blue Mountain Park Plan process would involve the creation of a schematic plan for the park based on the assessment of the state of the current park programs, infrastructure and amenities, and which will define the future park needs for this park. The plan will be prepared in consultation with Council and the community. The park concept plan will be accompanied by an implementation strategy in order to prioritize the necessary steps to move from the present state to the future vision.

The following steps and schedule are proposed as part of the planning process:



Following its adoption, the Blue Mountain Park Plan process may roll directly into the first phase of park development for some of the key elements within

the concept, which can then inform budget discussions and future phasing priorities.

Financial Implications:

Blue Mountain Park has been identified by staff as a priority project to receive funding as part of the 2018 Capital Plan utilizing unallocated development revenues such as Bonus Density. As such, staff are proposing to include \$1 million in the 2018 Capital Plan for initial planning work for Blue Mountain Park as well this funding will provide early seed money for future project implementation. In the meantime, with Council endorsement, staff will initiate this process using Park Planning funding in the Capital Plan to provide bridge funding until budget approval.

Once the Blue Mountain Park Plan is completed, implementation of individual projects will be constructed by either Strategic Initiatives or PRC Parks Operations (depending on the scope of the project.) Those items identified for the short-term will be built into the 5-Year Capital Plan utilizing the funding allocated by Council as part of the 2019 and 2020 Budget.

Detailed design and construction costs for future specific projects will require separate approvals and budgets and will be included for Council approval at the time that those projects are initiated. It is anticipated that some of the more immediate requirements will include those related to supporting aquatics such as the water spray pad and wading pool.

Conclusion:

Blue Mountain Park is one of Coquitlam's most popular parks providing sport, recreation, and cultural amenities for residents and visitors. Given the need to replace existing aging assets some of which are at end of life, and anticipated growth in Austin Heights and Southwest Coquitlam in general, developing a Plan for this park with an implementation strategy is a significant step to sustain and enhance the quality of outdoor offerings in the park. The final Blue Mountain Park Plan will provide a practical, community-based schematic concept plan with illustrative conceptual plans for future improvements, and a phased construction strategy to implement improvements in the park.

Raul Allueva, RPP

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Blue Mountain Park Context Area Map
- Attachment 2 – Blue Mountain Park Amenities Map
- Attachment 3 – Report Power Point Presentation

This report was prepared by Andre Isakov, Park Planning & Design Manager and Lanny Englund, Manager, Park Planning & Forestry with input from Pinky De La Cruz, Manager, Facility Assets, Kathleen Reinheimer, Manager, Parks, Mary Morrison- Clark, Manager, Community, Recreation & Culture Services, Ian Radnidge, Director, Strategic Projects, and Michelle Hunt, General Manager Financial & Information Services.