

February 27, 2020

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To: City Manager

From: General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture Services

Subject: **Town Centre Park - Lake Loop Improvements Concept Plan**

For: **Council-in-Committee**

Recommendation:

That the Committee receive the report of the General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture Services dated February 27, 2020 and entitled "Town Centre Park - Lake Loop Improvements Concept Plan" for information.

Report Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to seek Committee feedback on the proposed Lake Loop improvements including the Garden Walk, trail improvements, and forest enhancements at Town Centre Park. Feedback on the improvements will be incorporated into the detailed design and presented to Council in summer 2020.

Strategic Goal:

This initiative aligns with the City's Corporate Strategic Goals of establishing *Healthy Communities and Active Citizens* and building *Safe & Complete Neighbourhoods*. The ongoing improvements at Town Centre Park are noted as a B Priority in the 2020 Business Plan.

Executive Summary:

Town Centre Park is the premier outdoor recreation facility in Coquitlam acting as a destination site for sports, recreation, leisure and cultural pursuits. On March 5, 2018 Council approved the Town Centre Park Master Plan, which outlined a series of park development priorities including improvements to the Festival Lawn and the Lake Loop. With the Festival Lawn, Hub, Servedy and Washroom improvements currently under construction, staff has developed a conceptual plan and Class D estimate for the proposed enhancements to the Lake Loop including the Garden Walk, trail improvements and forest enhancements that are anticipated to guide the next phase of park improvements for Council's information. Staff have



also initiated, as part of this next phase of short term improvements, the design of a two-stall universal washroom near the Evergreen Cultural Centre. Pending Committee's feedback, staff intends to proceed with the development of a detailed design including budget estimates and implementation timelines for approval in a subsequent report to Council in summer 2020.

Background:

Town Centre Park is the urban jewel in the City's park system, and in 2017 was voted the top Great Public Space in Canada. At over 100 acres this well-loved destination park is heavily used to facilitate a myriad of recreational and cultural pursuits, drawing hundreds of thousands of visits annually. On March 5, 2018, Council approved the Town Centre Park Master Plan (TCPMP) that outlined a 20-year vision for the park including a framework of short (2018-2022), medium (2023-2027) and long-term (2028-2037) priorities to guide the park's ongoing development and ensure this park continues to be improved in order to serve the needs of the community now and in the future.

In conjunction with Council's adoption of the TCPMP, staff was directed to commence with the planning and implementation of identified short-term priorities beginning with the Festival Lawn, Hub, Served and Washroom improvements, which are anticipated to be completed by the summer of 2020. Currently, staff is engaged in the preliminary planning of additional short-term priorities endorsed by Council, including an additional washroom with two universal stalls, located at the southwest corner of Lafarge Lake near the Evergreen Cultural Centre, as well as Lake Loop improvements that include the Garden Walk, trail improvements and forest enhancements, which are the focus of this report (Attachments 1 and 2).

Discussion/Analysis:

The Lake Loop improvements span an area covering approximately 23 acres (9.3 hectares) and focus primarily on the trail, lawn and vegetated areas immediately surrounding Lafarge Lake and extending out to the Inspiration Garden at the southwest corner of the park. The Lake Loop is primarily used as a popular year-round walking circuit, although it does currently facilitate some water-based recreational pursuits and is the epicenter of the Lights at Lafarge winter light display, which take place annually between November and January.

Existing Condition

Although the Lake Loop itself is only 1.2 km in length, it does afford users a variety of unique experiences due in part to the varied exposure, topography and adjacent land-uses along its edges. The east side of the Lake Loop has seen the most recent development with the construction of the TD Community Plaza in 2017 and now the improvements to the Festival Lawn, Hub, Servery and Washroom expected to be completed this summer. The north and south sides of the lake are primarily characterized by young cottonwood and alder tree stands and are not currently actively used for any specific recreational purpose, though both provide much needed shade during the summer months. Given the historical use of the site, both areas have relatively low plant diversity related in part to inadequate volume and quality of soil. This remnant vegetation has been identified in the TCPMP as needing improvement and will be discussed in further detail in a subsequent section of this report. The island at the north end of the lake is a unique feature that has not previously been earmarked for public use. Finally, the western edge is flanked predominantly by sloping lawn areas and small clusters of mixed-tree plantings. This area is not particularly well suited to active use, but is helpful to buffer the effects of traffic, temper the topographic changes on the west edge of the park as well as provide filtered views into the park's picturesque backdrop.

Proposed Lake Loop Improvement Phases/Zones

Staff has engaged a consultant to develop the conceptual framework for the Lake Loop improvements based on the vision and recommendations in the TCPMP. Building off a thorough site inventory and analysis, the team has organized the improvements into four distinct zones (Attachment 3):

1. Garden Walk
2. Island Walk
3. Urban Walk
4. Forest Walk

The proposed zones will strive to maximize the inherent potential within each of the zones while offering users a variety of inclusive and barrier free opportunities that will enrich the park experience for years to come. The following is a summary of proposed elements:

Garden Walk

The Garden Walk will be a significant horticultural feature extending from the Inspiration Garden to the Lake's edge then heading north and ultimately through to Pinetree Way as a way to further enhance the park experience and better connect the amenities.

Additional enhancements include (Attachment 4):

- Floral display beds that will become a defining feature of the Lake Loop, providing an enhanced sensory experience for park users;
- New major node directly adjacent the TD Community Plaza with tiered access to create a destination at the water's edge; and
- New pedestrian-oriented nodes including feature paving and custom seating elements to facilitate social interaction, relieve crowding along the primary trail, and provide users a restful location to enjoy the views across Lafarge Lake towards the City Centre.

Island Walk

A largely untapped resource from a programming perspective since the Park's creation in the early 1990s, staff is proposing the following new uses for this unique and underutilized landform including (Attachment 5):

- New bridge connections and meandering trails add to the existing Lake Loop trail as noted in the TCPMP;
- A contemporary "Island Landing" plaza with views oriented toward the lake and City Centre;
- Improved channel water quality, function, and aesthetics;
- A more diverse blend of trees for shade, forest structure, and seasonal interest; and
- Provision of lighting to improve visibility and safety.

Urban Walk

This area parallels Pinetree Way and is the most direct connection in the Park to the City Centre. The Urban Walk includes the following proposed elements intended to improve and complement the multiplicity of recreational needs for the rapidly-growing community (Attachment 6):

- The new wharf deck will become the focal node along the Urban Walk that will feature integrated seating to facilitate social

interaction, provide improved water access and invite users with a place to rest and take in the beauty of the surroundings;

- A new two-stall universal washroom near the Evergreen Cultural Centre to serve the many users of the Lake Loop, complementing the Festival Servery and Washroom that will open this summer; and
- Additional pedestrian-oriented lighting to complete the Lake Loop.

Forest Walk

Focused on improving the recreational and aesthetic experience, along with the health and diversity of the forest, staff have identified improvements including (Attachment 7):

- Upgraded and widened (4 m wide) asphalt trail with sections of boardwalk along the primary loop to alleviate crowding during busy times;
- Extensive tree replacement and woodland plantings that will improve diversity, health, safety, aesthetics and sustainability of the forest; and
- New meandering trails through the forested zone to provide additional access and opportunities for exploration.

Potential Future Enhancements

Through the concept development stage, staff have also conceived of a number of future potential enhancement opportunities that could strengthen the urban character, recreational capacity and user experience along the Lake's western and southern edges. This includes a shoreline boardwalk, urban beach, enhanced boat launch and an elevated forest viewing platform. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there is no current funding, nor have any of these elements been previously identified as TCPMP priorities. As such, although these opportunities are not being pursued at this time, staff will be evaluating additional elements that could form part of future enhancements. Staff remain focused on the planning and delivery of priorities outlined in the TCPMP, including additional future planned upgrades to the playground and water spray park that are part of the next phase of park improvements.

Project Timeline

Should Committee support the proposed concept plan for the Town Centre Park Lake Loop Improvements, staff will initiate the detailed design phase

and report back to Council with a detailed design, implementation plan and budget for approval in summer 2020. Given the complexity and scope of improvements within the report, staff is anticipating that the improvements outlined above will be phased and implemented over a two-year period, although forest improvements will be implemented over several years to ensure the long-term health and stability of the forest.

Public information on this next stage of TCPMP improvements will be shared through information bulletins, the City Page in the local newspaper, the City's website, social media and site signage as has been done with the current Festival Lawn, Hub, Servedy and Washroom project in the Park.

Construction/Project Delivery

The delivery/construction of the new washroom near the Evergreen Cultural Centre will be completed by the Civic Lands and Facilities. However, all of the remaining work, including all of the Lake Loop improvements will be managed and delivered internally by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Service's capital construction team. This new delivery model will allow for added efficiencies and cost savings through all stages of the project, while also supporting increased flexibility in the phasing and implementation of the improvements at the City's most actively used park. Council supported the creation of this team in 2018 and increased construction efficiencies have already been realized from this initiative. The Lake Loop improvement work will showcase the skills and project efficiencies inherent to this type of project delivery; including lower construction costs.

Financial Implications:

Capital Funding

The TCP short-term improvements are funded through previously allocated \$1,450,000 in Density Bonus funds plus the \$4,000,000 allocated in 2019 for a total available budget envelope of \$5,450,000. In September 2019, Council authorized an advance of the 2020 funding to cover a \$1,250,000 shortfall related to the Phase 2 Festival Lawn, Hub, Servedy, and Washroom project that is currently under construction. As a result, \$4,200,000 remains available to fund all the elements described within the current project scope. The current Class D estimate suggests that project costs are generally in-line with TCPMP estimates from 2017, keeping in mind that year-over-year construction escalation since 2017 may drive the costs beyond these estimates. The current funding summary is shown in the table below

including previous estimates that were developed as part of the TCPMP. When the detailed design is presented to Council this summer more accurate costing will be provided.

TCP Short-Term Improvements ¹	Available Funding	Allocated to Date ²	Total Available	TCPMP Estimate ³		Estimated Cost ⁴
				Low	High	
S05 Understory Improvements	\$5,450,000 Density Bonus	-	-	\$400,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
S06 New Connection		-	-	\$800,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,400,000
S07 On Water Improvements		-	-	\$500,000	\$800,000	\$800,000
S08 Garden Walk		-	-	\$700,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
S09 Evergreen Washroom		-	-	\$300,000	\$700,000	\$600,000
Phase 2 Festival Hub & Washroom		\$1,250,000	-	-	-	-
Total:	\$5,450,000	\$1,250,000	\$4,200,000	\$2,700,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,300,000

¹See Attachments 1 and 2

²Approved by Council on September 3, 2019

³TCPMP Class D estimates are in 2017 dollars

⁴Based on 2020 Class D Estimate (+/- 30% accuracy).

Operating Costs

As part of the completion of the detailed design for all park projects, staff determined the anticipated impact of the proposed park improvements on the operating budget. This will take into consideration the increased operating costs of new improvements, less the existing operating dollars already in the budget. The estimated net change in operating costs tied to capital will be provided to Council at the detailed design approval stage and, assuming Council approves the capital budget, will be brought forward as an operating tied to capital request for the subsequent budget cycle.

Conclusion:

The planning and construction of Town Centre Park improvements are currently a B Priority on the 2020 Business Plan. Staff has completed the conceptual design and Class D estimate for the Lake Loop improvements for Committee feedback based on the vision set forth in the TCPMP. These

improvements will continue to ensure that Town Centre Park fulfils the vision as the urban jewel in the City's park system and one of the Great Public Spaces in Canada.

Incorporating Committee's feedback on the Lake Loop Improvement Concept Plan, staff will update the proposed concept plan and proceed towards the development of a comprehensive detailed design, budget and implementation plan for Council approval in summer of 2020.



Donnie Rosa

Attachments:

1. Town Centre Park Master Plan Short Term Priorities (CEDMS #: 3668007)
2. Town Centre Park Master Plan Short Term Priorities Cost Estimate (CEDMS #: 3668010)
3. Lake Loop Site Plan (CEDMS #: 3668020)
4. Garden Walk Rendering (CEDMS #: 3668034)
5. Island Walk Rendering (CEDMS #: 3668038)
6. Urban Walk Rendering (CEDMS #: 3668044)
7. Forest Walk Rendering (CEDMS #: 3668071)

This report was prepared by Doron Fishman, Park Planner 2 and reviewed by Andre Isakov, Park Planning and Design Manager, Lanny Englund, Manager Park Planning and Forestry, Kathleen Reinheimer, Manager Parks, Scott Groves, Director Strategic and Capital Projects, Gorana Cabral, Financial Planning Manager and Kathleen Vincent, Manager Corporate Communications.

Town Centre Park Master Plan Short-Term Priorities



Town Centre Park Master Plan Short-Term Priorities Cost Estimate

4.2.2.1 PRELIMINARY OPINION OF PROJECT COST

PRIORITY: SHORT TERM (2018-2022)									
Zone	Item #	Action	Location/Category	Land Use Typology	Approximate Area (m ²)	Related Projects for Consideration	Guideline	Probable Cost Range	
								Low	High
A	S01	Add restrooms and storage facility at future Festival Hub.	Green Commons: Festival Hub	Facility	N/A	S05	Section 3.4.1	\$600,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
	S02	Festival Lawn: Expand Festival Lawn westward into existing BMX park to provide additional open space available to a variety of park programs and activities. Improve areas to provide support for large festival events such as Canada Day celebration.	Green Commons: Festival Lawn	Lawn	10000	S04	Section 3.3.1	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,300,000.00
TOTAL COST OF ZONE A PROJECTS								\$1,600,000.00	\$2,300,000.00
B	S03	Expand, update and improve children's play area to include unique play elements accessible to children of all ages and abilities. Remove two existing volleyball courts and retain four sand volleyball courts.	Park Core: Play Area	Play Area	4800	S02, S03	Section 3.3.2	\$1,000,000.00	\$2,500,000.00
	S04	Upgrade and expand Water Play Area to be dynamic and appealing to a wide range of age groups and abilities.	Park Core: Water Play	Water Area	1900	S01, S03	Section 3.3.2	\$1,200,000.00	\$3,000,000.00
TOTAL COST OF ZONE B PROJECTS								\$2,200,000.00	\$5,500,000.00
C	S05	Enhance the health and quality of the forested areas including the understory surrounding the lake.	Green Commons: North and South Lake Margins	Understory	10800	S07	Section 3.3.1 Section 3.4.8 Section 3.4.9	\$400,000.00	\$500,000.00
	S06	Improve pathway loop around Lafarge Lake including a new connection through the north lake area.	Green Commons: North and South Lake Margins	New Connection	3100	S06	Section 3.3.1 Section 3.4.2	\$800,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
	S07	Introduce "on the water" areas such as decks and wharfs for better access to the water as well as a dedicated location(s) for fishing.	Green Commons: North and South Lake Margins	On Water	1400		Section 3.3.1 Section 3.4.6	\$500,000.00	\$800,000.00
	S08	Garden Walk: Design a significant horticultural feature that extends from the Inspiration Garden, weaves through the park, and ends at Pinetree Way and Trevor Wingrove Way.	Town Centre Park	Garden Walk	6700	S06	Section 3.4.10	\$700,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
	S09	Add new restrooms near the Evergreen Cultural Centre.	Green Commons: Evergreen Cultural Centre	Facility	N/A		Section 3.4.1	\$300,000.00	\$700,000.00
TOTAL COST OF ZONE C PROJECTS								\$2,700,000.00	\$4,500,000.00
S10	Wayfinding: Develop a site-wide signage and visual identity strategy to emphasize its unique character and importance.	Town Centre Park	Strategy	N/A			Section 3.4.3	\$75,000.00	\$100,000.00
S11	Lighting: Develop a site-wide lighting strategy for the park to address the multiple lighting needs.	Town Centre Park	Strategy	N/A			Section 3.4.4	\$25,000.00	\$50,000.00
S12	Conduct an operational review of parking lots and encourage multiple programming opportunities.	Town Centre Park	Strategy	N/A			Section 3.4.7	\$25,000.00	\$50,000.00
S13	Furnishings and Elements: Develop a site wide furnishing be developed to address the multiple needs.	Town Centre Park	Strategy	N/A			Section 3.4.13	N/A	N/A
S14	Emphasize park system of looped park paths through consistent pathway surface treatments, colours, nodes and wayfinding signage.	Town Centre Park	Strategy	N/A			Section 3.4.2	N/A	N/A
S15	Material Quality: Introduce unique and cohesive identifying colours and material palette for the park, to be used to create a sense of place through repeated use on park elements.	Town Centre Park	Strategy	N/A			Section 3.4.12	N/A	N/A
S16	Provide more open space and amenities for informal recreation and picnicking.	Town Centre Park	Strategy	N/A			Section 3.3.1 Section 3.4.1 Section 3.4.13	N/A	N/A
S17	Weather Protection: Use durable, well-designed materials and appropriate landscaping to make the site more comfortable for users and increase the longevity of site elements over time.	Town Centre Park	Strategy	N/A			Section 3.4.12 Section 3.4.13	N/A	N/A
TOTAL COST OF ALL STRATEGIES								\$125,000.00	\$200,000.00
TOTAL COST OF SHORT-TERM PRIORITY PROJECTS								\$6,625,000.00	\$12,500,000.00

Notes:
Adjustments for construction cost escalation and inflation are not included.









