



CORPORATE REPORT

To: Fraser Valley Regional District Board

Date: 2018-09-25

From: Christina Vugteveen, Manager of Park Operations
David Urban, Manager of Outdoor Recreation Planning

File No: 6120-40-Sub-Regional

Subject: Sub-Regional Parks (West) Workshop Summary

INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Board of information pertaining to the Sub-Regional Parks (West) Workshop held on June 26, 2018. Staff is not looking for a recommendation and has forwarded this information should members want more clarification or to discuss the item further.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Environmental Stewardship

Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

Provide Responsive & Effective Public Services

PRIORITIES

Priority #4 Tourism

Priority #5 Outdoor Recreation

BACKGROUND

In April 2018, Glenn Valley Regional Park, Matsqui Trail Regional Park, and the western flank of Sumas Mountain transferred operation from Metro Vancouver Regional District to the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD). The City of Abbotsford (COA) is operating Glen Valley Regional Park and Matsqui Trail Regional Park under contract, and the FVRD has added the western flank of Sumas Mountain to the operations while continuing to operate the eastern flank. These three parks operate out of a sub-regional service area which includes Abbotsford and a portion of Electoral Area (EA) G.

On June 26, 2018, FVRD directors from Abbotsford and the director from EA G had an initial workshop with staff from both local governments to discuss the vision, opportunities, and priorities for these three regional parks. This report includes a summary of these comments which will be utilized for future budgeting and planning purposes.

DISCUSSION

Three questions framed the workshop discussion:

What is your VISION for these Regional Parks?

What are the greatest OPPORTUNITIES?

What are your PRIORITIES?

The discussion resulted in comments specific to each park and some more general in nature and are summarized as follows:

Glenn Valley Regional Park

- Explore opportunities to enhance day time activities with shelters, picnic tables, benches and washrooms;
- Enhance the trails through wayfinding and stewardship;
- Maintain and monitor the trees.

Matsqui Trail Regional Park

- Build a boat launch to access the Fraser River and help relieve the launching pressures on the north side in Mission;
- Enhance river access for residents, First Nations, and visitors;
- Develop a strategy to identify potential uses of leased lands as they expire;
- Washrooms and refuse containers are needed at the trailheads;
- Maintain and monitor the trees;
- Enhance opportunities for day use activities with benches, picnic tables, and shelters.

Sumas Mountain Regional Park

- First Nations have long been the stewards of Sumas Mountain so learn from them and work together;
- Undertake a biodiversity inventory so sensitive habitats can be identified and no-go zones established;
- Create a park management plan that is an inclusive process, based on a comprehensive understanding of the park, and offers a long term vision (i.e. 1,000 years);
- Explore incorporating surrounding Crown land into the park to enhance the park;
- Identify an connect to link together the east and west flanks of this park;
- The Abby Grind is an unsanctioned trail in a sensitive area so explore other longer grind opportunities within the park as a substitute;

- Mountain biking is an economic generator with opportunity to expand in appropriate areas within the park and establish connections to existing trail network within the Crown land outside the park.

General Comments

- Ensure all these regional parks have the ability to increase opportunities for physical activity for all;
- Develop ecotourism recreational opportunities that could involve both the private sector and First Nations partnerships e.g. zip lines;
- Identify, understand, and honour First Nations regalia and gathering places within these parks;
- Work with First Nations so they can share their history, culture, and stories in these the parks e.g. signs, wayfinding, place naming;
- Incorporate Experience the Fraser's Canyon to Coast Trail and Blueway in all three parks;
- Address garbage and illegal dumping in a timely manner;
- Create educational component to unite people, create social awareness, and behavioural change to garner public buy-in for key issues (e.g. salmon storm drain marking program;
- Develop a land acquisition strategy for all these parks;
- Explore uses of technology in all three parks (e.g. identifying park amenities, trail locations, interpretive information).

COST

There is no cost at this time. Any cost implications will be a part of the budgeting discussions for the Sub-Regional Parks (West) Service Area.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This workshop served to bring together both elected officials and staff from both local government organizations. The main objective was to establish a better understanding of the governance structure, the lands under transfer, and operational structures leading to informed discussions moving forward to shape future planning, infrastructure and budgeting needs for the parks.

Next steps will include budget preparations with staff from both the FVRD and the City of Abbotsford (October) with initial budget meeting with the Sub-regional board representatives (post-election) prior to finalization of the budget for consideration by the Board as a whole.

COMMENT BY:

Barclay Pitkethly, Director of Regional Programs

Reviewed and supported

Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services

No further financial comments.

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer

Reviewed and supported