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REPORT TO TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2022

SUBJECT **Regional Parks Strategic Plan Update**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide information on the status of the Regional Parks Strategic Plan update.

BACKGROUND

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Board initiated an update of the Regional Parks Strategic Plan at its meeting of December 8, 2021 and extended the 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan until July 2022 when an updated document will be brought forward (Appendix A).

The Regional Parks Committee provided input on the proposed direction for the new Regional Parks Strategic Plan. On February 9, 2022, the CRD Board accepted the proposed vision, mission, values and priority statements for stakeholder, First Nations and public input and recommended that a lens of conservation and protection of biodiversity be applied to the priorities and processes (Appendix B). Engagement with stakeholder groups and the public occurred between February and April 2022. Engagement with First Nations is ongoing throughout the process.

The region faces different challenges and opportunities since the Regional Parks Strategic Plan was adopted in 2012. Revisions to the Regional Parks Strategic Plan need to be in alignment with a number of Board-approved strategies that have been passed since 2012: Regional Growth Strategy, Regional Transportation Plan, Climate Action Strategy and the Special Task Force on First Nations Relations Final Report. Updating the Strategic Plan will draw from these Board directions, the engagement process, as well as from relevant legislation and guidance documents, operational knowledge and the results of public surveys.

The Transportation Committee Terms of Reference was approved by the CRD Board on March 9, 2022. The purpose of the Committee includes providing input into the Regional Parks Strategic Plan.

An updated Regional Parks Strategic Plan with a fulsome slate of actions and targets will be presented to the Transportation Committee and Regional Parks Committee in June 2022 for input and making recommendations to the CRD Board.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The 2019-2022 CRD Corporate Plan envisions that residents of the region have access to convenient, green and affordable multi-modal transportation systems that enhance community well-being. A new vision for the region and associated Corporate Plan will be developed in the fall for the 2023-2026 Board term.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

CRD strategies providing direction for regional trails, mobility and active transportation adopted since the 2012-21 Regional Parks Strategic Plan was developed include: 2014 Regional Transportation Plan, 2016 Regional Trails Management Plan, 2018 Regional Growth Strategy, 2018 Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan, 2021 Climate Action Strategy and the regional transportation priority areas. Updating the Strategic Plan to reflect how these strategic initiatives align with the Regional Parks' service, as well as modernizing the format of the document, will improve its application to service delivery.

Intergovernmental Implications

The regional trails system serves as the anchor for the broader active transportation network in the region. Coordination and cooperation between CRD Regional Parks, municipalities, First Nations and other agencies is key to an integrated and functional multi-modal system. The Transportation Committee currently supports regional coordination within the existing governance structure.

First Nations in the region are invited to engage in the Regional Parks Strategic Plan update in an early, meaningful and ongoing manner to determine the key priorities and initiatives to work on together over the next five to ten years. The updated Strategic Plan will support the CRD's commitment to reconciliation as a key priority and highlight opportunities for ongoing and meaningful engagement with First Nations on initiatives such as park management, ecosystem restoration, shared prosperity, and support the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan 2022-27.

Social Implications

A new focus on accessibility and equity in the regional parks and trails system is proposed for the updated Strategic Plan. Initiatives that promote complete and connected communities by ensuring recreation, parks and green space can be easily accessed by transit, walking or cycling, and that strengthen an accessibility and equity lens in service delivery, are proposed that build on concepts in the Regional Growth Strategy and regional transportation priority areas.

Environmental & Climate Implications

Regional parks and trails are vital in helping to achieve the region's climate action, natural resource protection and active transportation goals. The Bike and Pedestrian classification includes the Lochside, E&N and Galloping Goose between Victoria and Luxton Road in Langford. Bike and Pedestrian Trails are designated primarily to accommodate a high volume of users for recreational and commuting cycling, and for walking and running. They are the arterial cycling trails in the region and non-motorized vehicle transportation corridors for commuters. The 2020 Regional Trails Widening Study informs improved facility design standards for accessibility, safety and user comfort in the high-use sections of regional trails. Consideration will be given to the applicability of the existing regional trails classification system in light of advancing active transportation options over the next decade.

Advancing regional active transportation opportunities that contribute to greenhouse gas reduction is a key priority proposed to advance climate action and resiliency in the Regional Parks Strategic Plan.

Service Delivery Implications

The CRD Regional Parks service continues to manage and operate the regional trails system while decision-making is supported by advice and recommendations provided to the CRD Board through the Regional Parks Committee and the Transportation Committee. Any changes to the operation and management of regional trails for active transportation will have service delivery implications.

Financial Implications

Financial implications associated with service level adjustments identified by the updated Strategic Plan will be considered by the CRD Board in future service planning processes.

CONCLUSION

The 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan expires in July 2022. The 2022 Terms of Reference for the Transportation Committee includes input on the Regional Parks Strategic Plan. The Transportation Committee's April 20, 2022 meeting is an opportunity to receive information on the status of the Regional Parks Strategic Plan update. An updated Strategic Plan will be brought forward to the Transportation Committee and Regional Parks Committee in June 2022 for review and comment and to the Board for decision July 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: Strategic Plan Update Process
- Appendix B: Proposed Direction of Regional Parks Strategic Plan
- Appendix C: Presentation