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## REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017

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**SUBJECT**     Draft Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands

### **ISSUE**

The Draft Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands is ready for public review.

### **BACKGROUND**

At its February 2017 meeting, the Regional Parks Committee recommended that the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board approve a project scope and engagement process for the Regional Trails Plan and the project's initiation. The CRD Board approved the proposed project scope and engagement process, and initiated the project at its March 8, 2017 meeting. Although the Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island are two separate Electoral Areas within the CRD, for the purposes of the Regional Trails Plan, Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands are collectively referred to as the Gulf Islands.

Staff conducted an initial round of engagement during March and early April 2017. The engagement process and input received are highlighted in the public participation report (Attachment 1). This initial round of public participation informed the vision, trail routes and priorities, and policies outlined in the draft plan.

The draft Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands has now been prepared (Attachment 2) and is ready for public review. The draft plan and comment form will be available on the CRD website and on-island information booths at local markets will be used to inform the public about key aspects and the opportunity to provide input through the website. The draft plan will also be sent to key government stakeholders and First Nations for comment. Input from this next round of participation will be considered before finalizing the Regional Trails Plan for approval.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

#### *Alternative 1*

That the Regional Parks Committee recommend to the CRD Board:

That the draft Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands be made available for public review and comment.

#### *Alternative 2*

That the Regional Parks Committee refer the draft Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands back to staff with direction for revision.

### **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The draft Plan identifies a conceptual regional trail route for each island and outlines policies to guide the plan's implementation. Input from the public consultations informed the draft plan.

Release of the draft plan for public review continues the planning process as anticipated and outlined to the public.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands is conceptual in nature and environmental implications are unknown at this stage. As per the Regional Trails Management Plan direction (2016), preference for routing is along road corridors where possible and practical. Environmental information will be reviewed as part of the detailed trail planning and design stage for each trail, prior to trail development.

### **ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

This project is identified in the Regional Parks 2016-2019 Service Plan and the budget for the planning process is part of the Regional Parks' core budget for 2017.

Development of approximately 50 km of regional trails on the Gulf Islands as proposed in the draft plan will have significant economic implications. Therefore, the draft plan recommends a phased approach to implementation and emphasizes that external funding sources will be required to construct the proposed trails, in addition to the \$200,000/year currently identified in the Regional Parks approved capital plan.

Based on a final approved plan for regional trails on the Gulf Islands, individual trail development projects will be incorporated into the Regional Parks Service Plan and Capital Plan, and grant opportunities would be pursued. CRD staff will monitor grant opportunities, liaise with other government agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and CRD's Commissions in the Gulf Islands, to promote potential partnership opportunities or joint grant applications.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Development of the plan is being done in consultation with Parks Canada, BC Parks, BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and other CRD services. Engagement with First Nations was initiated early in the process and is ongoing. The draft plan will be circulated to the Economic Sustainability Commissions, the Parks and Recreation Commissions, as well as other government groups for comment.

### **CONCLUSION**

Staff completed the initial phase of public engagement and have developed the Draft Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands. The next steps are to provide the Draft Plan to government stakeholders and First Nations and to provide opportunities for public input on the Draft Plan before finalizing the plan for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Regional Parks Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the draft Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands be made available for public review and comment.

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

BH/MW:km

Attachments: Attachment 1 – Public Participation Report  
Attachment 2 – Draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan