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REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2017

SUBJECT Matthews Point Regional Park Management Plan

ISSUE

To initiate the preparation of a management plan for Matthews Point Regional Park Reserve.

BACKGROUND

Matthews Point Regional Park, on Galiano Island, was established in 1999 and is currently in park reserve status. The park is 33.58 ha in size and is located on the south-east tip of the island, adjacent to the local Bluff Park (Attachment 1). No official trails or visitor facilities are in place at this time, although some informal trails exist on site.

The service levels outlined in the Regional Parks Service Plan calls for the preparation or updating of two management plans per year. Staff believe that initiating a management plan for this small park, which has been in park reserve status for 18 years and is expected to have limited management issues, is appropriate at this time given other park and trail planning priorities.

This park is classified as a 'natural area' Regional Park in the Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021. Regional 'natural area' parks protect the natural environment and provide opportunities for a range of appropriate outdoor experiences and activities. They protect key greenspaces that are important to the natural character of the region. Where sensitive or threatened ecosystems exist in a Regional Park classified as a natural area, conservation is given management priority.

The purpose of a management plan is to provide direction on conservation and use, based on the park's classification, and to identify management and operational tasks to be undertaken. Attachments 2 and 3 outline the proposed project scope and public engagement process. Once a management plan is approved, the park would no longer be in "reserve" status.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

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

That the initiation of a management planning process for Matthews Point Regional Park, as per the project scope shown in Attachment 2 and the engagement process shown in Attachment 3, be approved.

Alternative 2

That the report be returned to staff for re-scoping as directed by the Committee.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Once a management plan is in place, the park reserve status is lifted and park facilities are developed. The management plan directs actions that enhance visitor experience and conservation at the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Through the management planning process, existing environmental information will be updated and any conservation actions necessary to manage visitor use will be identified. Informal trails exist on-site; these will be assessed through the planning process to determine if any changes are needed.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The Regional Parks Service Plan envisions two management planning processes per year being in progress. The Matthews Point Management Plan project will be one of those plans. Costs associated with this project will be covered by core funding.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The public engagement process will include opportunities for dialogue with interested First Nations and key entities, such as the Galiano Island Parks and Recreation Commission.

CONCLUSION

Matthews Point Regional Park is currently in park reserve status. A management plan will guide conservation, development, park operations and use, and will allow the park reserve status to be removed.

RECOMMENDATION

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

That the initiation of a management planning process for Matthews Point Regional Park, as per the project scope shown in Attachment 2 and the engagement process shown in Attachment 3, be approved.

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

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Attachments: Attachment 1 – Matthews Point Regional Park Context Map
Attachment 2 – Project Scope for Matthews Point Regional Park Management Plan
Attachment 3 – General Flow and Anticipated Timeframe for Consultation Process