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## REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

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**SUBJECT**    E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector

### **ISSUE SUMMARY**

This report provides an information update regarding the status of development of the E&N Rail Trail.

### **BACKGROUND**

In October 2006, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board initiated a project to develop a 17 kilometre long new regional trail largely within the E&N railway corridor and located beside the existing railway tracks. In 2007, due to the anticipated cost to develop the trail (\$36 million), a decision was made to undertake the project in a phased approach (Appendix A). Construction was initiated in 2009.

This trail provides both recreation and active transportation opportunities. To date, three of the five phases have been completed, creating approximately 13 km of new regional trail. The trail currently runs continuously between Jacklin Road in the City of Langford to Esquimalt Road in the City of Victoria; and links the City of Langford, Town of View Royal, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, Township of Esquimalt and City of Victoria (Appendix A).

Contributions of approximately \$21 million have been received from grant programs to assist in the development of the three completed trail phases. Additional funding to date has been provided through CRD Regional Parks' core budget and a CRD Board authorized loan.

Two remaining phases extend the trail by approximately 3.2 km in Langford between Jacklin Road and Humpback Road at the west end of the trail; and 0.7 km at the east end of the trail between Esquimalt Road and the Harbour Road overpass/Galloping Goose/Johnson Street Bridge end of the trail in conjunction with the City of Victoria (Appendix A).

A detailed status and explanation of the phases is provided in Appendix B.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### *Environmental & Climate Implications*

This regional trail adds to the regional opportunities for active recreation and active transportation, both of which assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### *Intergovernmental Implications*

The E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector route connects six communities: City of Langford, Town of View Royal, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, Township of Esquimalt and City of Victoria.

### *Social Implications*

This regional trail furthers the goal of promoting active and healthy communities. The trail is largely along a former railway corridor and most of the trail route is relatively flat and suited to use by people of all ages and abilities.

### *Financial Implications*

Capital grant funding is needed to complete Phase 5 of this regional trail and is currently identified as a total of \$4 million in years 2024 and 2025 of the Regional Parks' five-year capital plan.

### *Service Delivery Implications*

From a sustainable service delivery perspective, the remaining two sections of the trail will be developed using the same standards as the previous sections of trail (e.g., paved, minimum width 3m/preferred width 4m, standard regional trail signage) and, when complete, they will be incorporated into the asset management program as per other sections/other regional trails.

### *Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities*

In terms of alignment with Board priorities, this trail furthers the priority of Community Wellbeing – Transportation & Housing, as it provides additional regional multi-modal transportation opportunities to increase walking and cycling. It can also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which is a desired outcome under the Climate Action & Environmental Stewardship priority. The Esquimalt and Songhees Nations were involved in the planning of the trail sections in and around their communities, which aligns with the Board's priority relating to First Nations Reconciliation.

With respect to corporate priorities, the development of the E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector project aligns with the priorities of Fiscal Responsibility (approximately \$19 million of grant funding has been received to assist in the development of this regional trail); Efficiency & Collaboration (collaboration with each of the four municipalities and two First Nations has occurred during planning and construction); and Customer Service (this project expands the regional trail system to respond to increasing interest in active transportation and active recreation by regional residents).

### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 includes continuing construction of the E&N Rail Trail as a strategic action under Strategic Priority #2 (strategically plan for and open existing land banked regional parks and trails as resources are approved).

## **CONCLUSION**

The E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector is well in progress, with approximately 13 of the 17 km route now complete. This newest regional trail connects the City of Victoria, Township of Esquimalt, Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, Town of View Royal and City of Langford, expanding opportunities for active transportation and active recreation. Two remaining sections (Phase 4 and Phase 5) will extend the trail route in both directions, in the City of Victoria and the City of Langford. The CRD is moving forward, working with the City of Victoria, to begin

construction of Phase 4 in 2022, and Phase 5 will be scheduled once the route has been finalized and funding has been determined.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That this report be received for information.

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: Development Phasing Plan – Map
- Appendix B: Detailed Status of E&N Rail Trail Development