



GOVERNANCE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Title Parks Master Plan

Meeting Date February 27, 2025

Submitted By Councillor Crowson, Chair – Governance Standing Policy Committee

Recommendation from Governance Standing Policy Committee:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council adopt the following recommendations:

1. Adopt the 2024 Parks Master Plan, as in Attachment 2, in principle, as a guiding document to provide direction for the continued planning, development and operation of the City of Lethbridge's parks system.
2. Direct Administration to return to City Council, through the Economic and Finance Standing Policy Committee, for approval of any of the objectives identified in the 2024 Parks Master Plan, as follows:
 - a. Capital Projects to be submitted to future Capital Improvement Program (CIP) deliberations;
 - b. Initiatives requiring operating budget changes to be submitted to future Operating Budget deliberations.

Vote:

In Favour: 4-0 (Unanimous)

Public Speakers at the Meeting: 1

Public Submissions: None

Submitted By Andrew Sommerville, Parks Planning Manager, Parks and Cemeteries

Presented By Andrew Sommerville, Parks Planning Manager
Catherine Berris, Urban Systems

Summary

The Parks department has undertaken the development of a new parks master plan to determine the direction of the department for the next 15-20 years. The development of this plan was completed by Urban Systems, an organization that was selected through an open RFP process. The plan aligns with other City strategic documents and focuses on park naturalization, trails and accessibility, park design and amenities and service delivery.

This new master plan will replace the previous plan, that was developed in 2007. Creating a new parks master plan is crucial for a community, as it ensures the thoughtful development and maintenance of green spaces, which are vital for residents' well-being. This plan will help address current and future recreational needs, promote environmental sustainability and enhance the overall quality of life.

Over the years, community needs and wants have evolved significantly. These changing community desires highlight the importance of updating the parks master plan. By involving community input, it fosters a sense of ownership and pride among residents, leading to more active and engaged communities.

Recommendation(s)

That the Governance Standing Policy Committee recommend City Council:

3. Adopt the 2024 Parks Master Plan, as in Attachment 2, in principle, as a guiding document to provide direction for the continued planning, development and operation of the City of Lethbridge's parks system.
4. Direct administration to return to City Council, through the Economic and Finance Standing Policy Committee, for approval of any of the objectives identified in the 2024 Parks Master Plan, as follows:
 - a. Capital Projects to be submitted to future Capital Improvement Program (CIP) deliberations;
 - b. Initiatives requiring operating budget changes to be submitted to future Operating Budget deliberations.

Financial

No funding or financial requirements requested.

Background and Prior Decisions

- The current Parks Master Plan was created in 2007. Many of the recommendations have been achieved and the City's needs are evolving.
- On [May 10-14, 2021](#) a request to update the Parks Master Plan was presented as part of the 2022-2031 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) at Economic Standing Policy Committee.
- On [June 1, 2021](#) Council approved the 2022-2031 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which included the funding approval for an updated Parks Master Plan:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT City Council adopt the recommendations of the May 10-14, 2021 Economic Standing Policy Committee, as provided in Attachment 2, as amended, excluding E-11 Sustainability Enhancements.

- On [June 1, 2023](#) City Council was engaged on the project during the Civic Works Standing Policy Committee meeting:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Civic Works Standing Policy Committee refer feedback on the Parks Master Plan received, as part of CIP Project D-48, to Administration to inform Plan development and request Administration return to the Civic Works Standing Policy Committee with a complete draft Master Plan by the end of Q1 2024

Engagement

Engagement was a key part of the development of this plan. The following is a summary of the engagement activities performed throughout the duration of the project.

- Community Survey – an online survey was hosted on the Get Involved Lethbridge website from November 21-December 19, 2022, to collect community input on the project. A total of 715 surveys were completed.
- Community Conversation – a public event was hosted by the City of Lethbridge to showcase current City projects and collect feedback from community members.
- Internal Stakeholder Sessions – The “what we heard” results from the community survey were shared and discussed for further input.
- Council Engagement Session – The “what we heard” results from the community survey were shared and discussed for further input.
- Community Stakeholder Sessions – The “what we heard” results from the community survey were shared and discussed for further input
- Youth engagement – Chalkboards were left at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre, as well as the Boys & Girls Club for extended periods of time with engagement questions. Staff at each site helped to facilitate responses. We also attended a student Wellness Fair at Lethbridge College (now Polytechnic) in 2023 to engage with students for feedback.

Recommendation and Option(s) Analysis

Option 1 – approve the Parks Master Plan recommendations as in Attachment 2 (pages iii-xi), to provide direction for the continued planning, development and operation of the City of Lethbridge’s parks system.

- *Community/Citizen* The plan was developed with extensive community engagement. The initiatives developed through the master plan have considered the community’s needs.

- Social – The plan considers design elements that are more inclusive and amenities that incorporate more cultural elements.
- Environmental – The plan includes recommendations to incorporate naturalized approaches to park design. It also provides opportunities for how the City maintains its parks.
- *Risks*
 - Reputational – Updating service levels or changing operational processes could lead to public dissatisfaction.
 - Strategic – Not adopting this plan could create a lack of alignment with other City strategic goals and plans.
 - Economic – opportunities for cost savings and/or budget pressures with some of the initiatives in the plan.
- *Implementation and Communication Plan* Operational adjustments will be communicated with the public. Initiatives with significant budget impacts will be presented at future Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and operating budget deliberations.

Option 2 – do not approve the Parks Master Plan recommendations as in Attachment 2 (pages iii-xi), to provide direction for the continued planning, development and operation of the City of Lethbridge’s parks system.

Attachment(s)

1. Parks Master Plan Presentation
2. Parks Master Plan

Link(s)

1. Get Involved Lethbridge - <https://getinvolvedlethbridge.ca/parks>

Approvals

Department Director: Carly Kleisinger

City Manager: Lloyd Brierley