

MINUTES
NATURAL AREAS, PARKS AND TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

via MS Teams

Thursday, April 13, 2024, at 4:02 p.m.

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff, Pamela Carroll, Christine Harbord, Dave Marecek, Evan Papps, Don Sutton and Darrell Wick

Regrets: Catherine Du Bois and David Little

Staff: Troy McKay, Senior Manager, Engineering; Megan Squires, Senior Transportation Planner; Paul de Greeff, Parks Manager of Planning & Development; Alix Link, Manager of Urban Forestry, Parks; Mike Goldsworthy, Park Planner Designer; Nikki McWalters, Landscape Technician, Parks; Kirsten Brazier, Senior Committee Clerk; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk.

CHAIRS REMARKS

- The Chair welcomed members to the committee.
- Preference is to meet in person, starting in May. Hybrid will be an option soon.
- Walking tours will also be added to meetings.

INTRODUCTIONS

- Introductions of staff and committee members were made.

REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

- The Chair reviewed the Terms of Reference.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

The Senior Manager of Engineering Services and the Senior Transportation Planner provided an update on the Active Transportation Plan (ATP). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The first ATP was adopted by Council in 2018 as a guide for active transportation developments for 30 years.
- The ATP is updated on an ongoing basis. Five years have now gone by, leading to this update.
- An equity approach has been applied to the planning process and to the updated plan. This is a key priority for this update.
- Equity considerations are informing the planning process. Gaps in our approach to equity are being reviewed and are then addressed.
- Staff are working with a tool to map out equity deserving groups in Saanich. It will help to inform priorities for infrastructure projects.
- The process of updating the plan is scheduled to be completed in the Fall of 2023. We are currently in phase 4 of 5. Phase 5 will begin in July and the update will be presented to this committee and then Council in Fall of 2023.
- Stakeholders were engaged in phases 2 and 3.
- Transportation Committees have been consulted throughout. A summary can be found on the ATP page on the Saanich website.
- Phase 4 focuses on public engagement and input will take place in May and June.

- Communication methods with the public and stakeholders include social media, print media, email notifications, and the project webpage.
- The plan is updated every 5 years. Demographics are updated for each review.
- The equity review did not identify glaring gaps but allow staff to have more information of how to reach different groups. A standard approach to reach the community is to hold open house events. Staff are reviewing barriers to participation and look to find ways to engage various groups.
- Crosswalks with notification lights will be updated to a new standard as projects come up.
- The Road Safety Action Plan is also being updated and opportunities for improvements are being identified.
- Older adults have been identified as a stakeholder. Individuals and senior organizations have been consulted. This will continue throughout the engagement period.
- Engagement with youth has taken place through consultation with the School Boards.
- Transportation and appropriate zoning for local destinations needs to be considered.
- Bike parking at local destinations are in need of improvement. This is being heard through the ATP engagement and are being considered by staff.

MCMINN BIKE PARK REFRESH

The Parks Manager presented on the McMinn Bike Park. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The Bike Park is located in Cordova Bay with a forested
- A bike park refresh has been proposed to better meet user needs.
- Local youth were consulted as part of the engagement for this park.
- The park was built in 2021. It currently has design element issues, invasive species and materials problems (e.g., rocks).
- Staff are collaborating with South Island Mountain Bike Society (SIMBS) to refresh the existing project.
- On May 10th a workshop will take place at Outerbridge Park. Staff hope to have the updated park open by the end of the summer.
- Focus was initially on younger children at the onset of the development of the park. There are a variety of ages of youth using the park.
- There are a range of community members that can have access to these facilities if a better design is employed.
- This facility has not yet met the needs of user groups. Many kids are attracted to the forest area.
SIMS has been engaged to discuss how to move kids out of the forest and onto the user facility.

BECKWITH DAM DECOMMISSIONING

The Park Planner Designer provided an update on the Beckwith Dam Decommissioning project. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Beckwith Park is adjacent to farming community and has a man-made pond. There are two small dams and one larger dam, built in the late 1950's. It originally was used for farm irrigation.
- A third party currently owns the water license. The park is now owned by Saanich and the owner of the water license would like to give it up.
- Dam safety regulations have recently changed and are now stricter.
- Proposals for abandoning the water license include breaching the dam. Other objectives are to ensure there is no safety risk to the public and to retain existing trails, trees and vegetation.
- Public engagement initially took place with signs posted at the park. An open house too

- place in February 2023, with an online questionnaire circulated. A project webpage was established to provide information.
- Public engagement results valued the native vegetation, water levels, existing trees and wildlife habitat.
 - There is still some confusion as to the proposed partial decommissioning of the dam. This would reduce the safety risk from significant to low.
 - The water license would be transferred to Saanich. A new footbridge would be installed.
 - This project would be funded by the current water license holder.
 - Alternatives would not satisfy public interests and provincial regulations.
 - If the dams were to be removed it would have significant environmental impacts.
 - Staff are fine tuning the preferred partial decommissioning option to minimize impacts to the environment.
 - The engineer working on the project continues to test water level management options.
 - More investigation is taking place with the goal to raise the water level.
 - Neighbours will be consulted and signs in the park will be updated as needed.
 - The North Quadra Community Association is involved in these discussions.
 - An environmental consultant is on board with this project. Part of the project would be introducing native species of plants to the area.
 - Once the hazard rating of the dam is downgraded and the hazard rating is lowered to low, the water license can then be transferred to the District. This will then allow for enhancements and further initiatives to take place.
 - Once the water is lowered, there will be less water feeding into Beckwith ponds. The main change would be where the water would flow into the creek.
 - Staff have been engaging with and educating the community to facilitate this administrative handover.

RUTLEDGE SPRAY PARK

The Park Planner Designer provided a presentation on the Rutledge Spray Park. The following was noted during committee. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- A grant was received to install a spray park at Rutledge Park. A design/build competition saw 4 proposals submitted. The contract will be finalized next week.
- Saanich has acquired land to expand the original park.
- The Quadra Cedar Hill Community Association proposed that Saanich build a spray park.
- At the same time the spray park will be installed, a new water and sewer line will also be laid.
- The project is funded through grants, the District, community amenity contributions, and donations.
- Staff will apply for a Tire Stewardship BC grant for a rubber playground surface.
- Water play pad includes 20 features and is “American Disabilities Act” (ADA) compliant.
- It has been designed to encourage adventure, discovery and exploration.
- The dry playground will encourage interactive play. A slide, zipline, swings, spinners, natural logs and steppers will be installed.
- The existing pink elephant will be retained.
- A washroom building will be installed and will be wheelchair accessible, gender neutral, including change rooms and a small maintenance room.
- An open house will be scheduled this spring and feedback will be incorporated.
- Construction will start in July and will open to the public in October. Access to the splash park will open the summer of 2024.
- Water source planning is being explored. Staff are considering retaining water in a storage tank that could be used to water trees. It is currently planned to be a flow through system.

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- The spray park will have water saving features added to it. A rain garden has been included to drain the park that would be treated and sent to the storm drain system.
 - The dry park will include components that are attractive to the 5 to 12 years age group.
 - Music in the Park will continue, no construction will take place in the evening.
 - The new building will help to form a windbreak.
 - A public art component will also be included in the design and build.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for May 11 , 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Councillor Judy Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Kirsten Brazier, Senior Committee Clerk