

TO: Her Worship Mayor Nicole Read
and Members of Council
FROM: Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Parks, Recreation and Culture Infrastructure Update

MEETING DATE: February 22, 2016
FILE NO:
MEETING: Workshop

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Council has discussed a number of projects related to parks, recreation and culture infrastructure over the past number of weeks. This includes the rehabilitation and repair of the Maple Ridge Leisure Centre, a new aquatic facility, a community centre in Albion in conjunction with an elementary school and neighbourhood learning centre, and a prioritization process for major infrastructure projects in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan developed in 2010.

In addition, in response to concern expressed by Council about a lack of investment in sport and recreation infrastructure, Council was presented with a funding strategy during the 2016 – 2020 business planning presentations that could be employed if Council wishes to expedite the development of community amenities such as this.

This report provides a brief overview of the work done to date, how the projects interrelate, and next steps that staff will be taking. The purpose of this report is to ensure clarity and to provide Council with an opportunity to provide additional direction if Council feels that this is required.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Receive for information and endorse the next steps outlined in the report titled Parks, Recreation and Culture Infrastructure Update, dated February 22, 2016.

DISCUSSION:

a) Background Context:

Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

The current Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (Master Plan) was completed and adopted by Council in 2010 following an extensive community consultation process. Recommendations in the Master Plan included a number of parks, recreation and culture infrastructure projects. Although this plan was adopted, Council of the day did not wish to proceed with establishing a funding source to implement major recommendations and the prioritization of these projects was therefore not completed. Major projects in the Master Plan can only proceed if a funding plan is established to accommodate them. In order to finalize a funding plan, it is necessary to confirm which recommendations Council wants to move forward as a short, medium or long-term priority.

Parks and Recreation Infrastructure Funding

Although no significant funding source was established for significant projects, a modest program was put in place in 2013 beginning with a 1/8 percent tax increase and a 1/2 percent tax increase in subsequent years. A portion of this funding was used to create a park planning technician position a number of years ago. The remaining funds have accumulated to \$520,000 so far, and are available to be applied toward future costs such as a small parks and recreation infrastructure project or toward operating costs of a new facility.

More recently, Council discussed a lack of investment in significant sports and recreation infrastructure in the lead up to the 2016 business planning process. Staff responded by bringing forward a funding strategy for parks and recreation community investments. The strategy is not currently incorporated into the 2016 - 2020 Financial Plan. Instead, it provides a recommended approach if Council wishes to expedite the development of sports and recreation infrastructure. The strategy demonstrated that Council could invest \$110M in parks, recreation and cultural amenities over the next four years with an additional tax increase of 0.75% for 2017 - 2024 and the commitment of funds currently servicing existing debt that expires in 2017. The capacity to provide for debt servicing and a substantial portion of the operating costs was included in the model, though the model would have to be refined as the list of amenities is defined. If Council wishes to proceed with a borrowing strategy such as this it will require both Ministry and elector approval.

Infrastructure Replacement Funding

In addition to only minimal funding being approved for implementation of the Master Plan, a funding deficit for the replacement of existing municipal infrastructure had accrued in Maple Ridge as in many other municipalities. To address this Council initiated a program of a 1% tax increase each year to fund infrastructure replacement projects. Although this increase in funding began in 2008, it was only in recent years that the revenue that this program generated had accumulated to an amount that would enable the City to address significant infrastructure replacement projects such as the retrofit of the Maple Ridge Leisure Centre (MRLC). The accumulation of adequate funding to tackle a major repair such as this coincided with emerging information about the MRLC such as as leaking pool tanks and major components reaching or exceeding their expected useful life expectancy, which raised the status of the MRLC repairs to a top priority.

In November 2014, Council endorsed a recommendation to use \$1.5M that had accumulated in the infrastructure reserve to fund repairs to the MRLC together with an annual allocation from the reserve over 5 years to recover the balance of the facility rehabilitation costs. Total costs were expected to be approximately \$5M had this work proceeded in 2016. The cost to rehabilitate and repair the MRLC in the future is expected to be considerably higher. However, the initial funding plan remains in place in the event that a major issue needs to be addressed in the interim.

Maple Ridge Leisure Centre

Although the Maple Ridge Leisure Centre (MRLC) is included in Council's list of infrastructure projects that are in the process of being prioritized, discussions on a retrofit to this facility began some time ago. Staff provided an update on the need for MRLC repairs to Council in July 2014. At that time, Council asked for additional information including a funding strategy for this project. This follow-up report came back to Council in November 2014, including the

financial strategy described above to use infrastructure funding to advance the project quickly so that renovations and repairs could occur in 2016.

In November 2014, Council provided direction to retain the services of an architect and mechanical engineer to complete the detailed design and tender documents for the MRLC renovations and repairs. An RFP for this work was issued in December 2014 and in February, 2015 Council gave staff direction to award the architectural design services to SHAPE Architecture Inc. AME Consulting Group Professional Engineers formed part of the design team that developed the engineered solutions. The design developed by SHAPE Architecture was subsequently approved by Council and direction was provided to tender the project.

In December, 2015, staff brought back a report with a recommendation to award the construction contract. New information gathered through the construction tender process presented in this report was that the work would necessitate a closure of the entire aquatic area for up to one year. In prior discussions with the engineer and architect involved in design development staff had anticipated that the project would be phased and would require a less lengthy closure of perhaps a few months. Council expressed concern about the impact a one year closure would have on the public and consequently deferred awarding the contract so that staff could bring back a report with more information including whether the work could be completed without such a significant closure to the aquatic facility.

The follow-up report came back to Council on December 10, 2015 and included a revised schedule that minimized the closure of the main pool tank. However, the leisure pool, hot tub and teach pool still required a one year closure. The loss of access to these areas would have a significant impact on the majority of our aquatic facility patrons. As a result of this information, Council made three decisions:

1. To collapse the tender process that was underway for the pool renovations.
2. To direct staff to bring back a report recommending a site, concept plan, public engagement process and plan that outlines the funding source and approval process for a new aquatic facility.
3. To direct staff to prepare a report that provides options on the future of the Maple Ridge Leisure Centre Facility.

The main thrust of Council's discussion was that the renovations and major repairs to the MRLC could be addressed after a second aquatic facility is open in order to significantly reduce disrupted access to aquatic services for those citizens who rely on use of the pool.

A report on options for the MRLC will be brought back to Council once a decision has been made about proceeding with a second aquatic facility. While the MRLC remains safe to use it is important that the necessary repairs are addressed in a timely manner. In addition, there is some risk that a repair issue may escalate so that it will need to be dealt with in a more urgent manner than the time it will take to construct a new aquatic facility. Staff will monitor the function of the facility and keep Council informed if new issues or concerns arise.

A New Aquatic Facility

In response to the direction that Council provided on December 10, 2015, staff brought forward reports on January 19 and February 1, 2016, to Closed Council Meetings regarding potential locations for a new aquatic facility. This responds to the first part of Council's recommendation to direct staff to bring back a report recommending a site, concept plan, public engagement process and plan that outlines the funding source and approval process for a new aquatic facility. A third report on this topic is scheduled to come to a Closed Council meeting on March 7, 2016.

Albion Community Hall

In January 2015, the City of Maple Ridge entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with School District No. 24 to conduct a joint community consultation process for an elementary school, neighbourhood learning centre, and community centre to be co-located in Albion. Council moved the consultation component of this amenity forward before completion of the prioritization process in order to capture the opportunity to work with the School Board to collaborate on developing a community vision for these amenities.

This public engagement process is well underway. The joint community consultation began with a community workshop attended by approximately 100 people on February 10, 2016 and an on-line survey that has received 216 responses to date. A draft concept plan will be brought back to a public workshop that the community has been invited to attend on February 25, 2016, and a second opportunity will be provided to input to this concept plan using an on-line survey. The final concept will then come back to Council for decision making. This investment will require borrowing and a public approval process before proceeding and operating costs will need to be planned into the budget.

Parks, Recreation and Culture Prioritization Process

Following business plan and financial plan presentations, Council proceeded with a process to prioritize key projects recommended in the Master Plan. At a Special Council Meeting on December 15, 2015, Brian Johnston led Council through a discussion to confirm Council's list of proposed infrastructure projects to be considered during this prioritization process and to define the criteria that Council will use. Following this discussion Council asked staff to work with the consultant and HCMA Architects to place the projects into "bundles" that recognize the synergies that can be gained by co-locating particular amenities. A summary of the infrastructure bundles is shown in Schedule A attached to this report, listed in no particular order.

The infrastructure bundles were brought back to a Council Workshop on January 11, 2016. Council then requested that the consultant and staff apply the criteria to the bundled facility list and this third report on this topic is expected to come to Council Workshop on March 7, 2016.

Community Engagement and Approval Processes

A comprehensive community engagement process will be undertaken once Council has confirmed a list of priorities that they wish to bring forward to the community for feedback. Once the list of priorities is defined electoral approval will also be required to approve the borrowing strategy. General information on both the community engagement and electoral

approval processes is described below, noting that a decision on a specific engagement program and approval process will be brought forward to Council further along in the planning process.

The scope of the public engagement program that will be put in place for the overall parks, recreation and culture infrastructure program will be comprehensive. It will include a number of workshops and on-line options that will make it easy for citizens to engage in providing their feedback. The goal of the public engagement program will be to ensure that citizens have ample opportunity to provide their input given the significance of the potential infrastructure projects. A communications plan will be employed to ensure that the public is fully informed about the process. Once community input is received, that information will be brought back to Council to consider when making decisions about next steps. The City will need to borrow for an investment of this size, and this will require public approval.

In addition, the community will be engaged in a planning process for each facility that Council chooses to proceed with in the lead up to the development of each project in a process that is similar to what we are currently conducting for the Albion Community Centre.

Before proceeding with long-term borrowing for a capital commitment, a loan authorization bylaw must be approved by the Inspector of Municipalities and the electors. Approval of the electors can be obtained either through the assent process or through the alternative approval process. The assent process is very similar to a local government election with advance voting opportunities and a general voting day with polling stations set up in convenient public locations. Costs would be similar to an election. In 2014, election costs were \$83,000. Under the alternative approval process Council can proceed with the bylaw if fewer than 10% of the electors submit a response form indicating that, in their opinion, Council cannot proceed without receiving assent of the electors. The cost of the alternative approval process is estimated to be under \$10,000 for the required advertising, supplies and staff time.

Next Steps

To work with Council to:

1. Complete the prioritization process for significant projects in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.
2. To develop an implementation schedule for the priority projects.
3. To finalize the borrowing strategy and operating costs for each of the identified projects and conduct a public approval process.
4. To develop and implement a communication plan, community engagement and consultation process for the overall Parks, Recreation and Culture infrastructure program.

The above steps will develop an overall program for the development of parks, recreation and culture amenities along with an implementation schedule and electoral approval. However, a fulsome community engagement process will also be implemented for each particular amenity that is prioritized leading up to the development of each project.

b) Strategic Alignment:

The work to move forward with the development of Parks, Recreation and Culture infrastructure projects aligns with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Plan adopted in 2010.

c) Citizen/Customer Implications:

Parks, Recreation and Cultural facilities support citizens to maintain healthy lifestyles through their participation in sport, recreation, arts, and culture in venues that allow citizens to connect with their neighbours and communities of common interest.

d) Interdepartmental Implications:

Various departments provide support to Community Development, Parks and Recreation as new facilities are developed including Planning, Engineering, Building, Clerks, Communications and Finance.

e) Business Plan/Financial Implications:

When the parks and recreation infrastructure prioritization process is complete, the resulting priority projects will need to be incorporated into both Capital and Operating Budgets. Mr. Gill, General Manager of Corporate and Financial Services presented Council with a sample strategy that could be used to invest up to \$110M in parks, recreation and cultural amenities over the next four years. However, the final funding strategy will need to be refined to fit the prioritization and implementation schedule that Council establishes.

CONCLUSIONS:

Significant emphasis has been placed on discussing parks, recreation and cultural amenities over the past number of weeks. Information provided in this report summarizes that work.

Staff will continue to work with Council to complete the prioritization of major parks, recreation and culture infrastructure projects at the March 7, 2016 Council Workshop. Once project priorities are established an implementation schedule will be developed, as will a community engagement and consultation process. Finance staff will then finalize the borrowing strategy, operating costs will be determined and included in future budgets, and the Clerks Department will support the public approval process. Council will be involved in all decisions at each step in this process.

For specific projects where planning has begun:

1. A report on potential locations for a new aquatic facility will be brought back to the March 7, 2016 Closed Council Meeting. After a site has been selected the remaining planning discussions will occur in public meetings.
2. Once Council has determined the priority and timing of a second aquatic facility, staff will bring back a report recommending how to proceed with rehabilitation and repairs to the Maple Ridge Leisure Centre.
3. The concept plan that is being developed for the Albion Community Centre will be presented to Council on February 22, 2016, and then brought back to the community for comment on February 25, 2016.

CONCLUSIONS (cont'd)

Although work has begun on the above projects, they are included in the prioritization process and implementation schedule that Council is working to develop. This larger planning process will encapsulate all of the individual initiatives that have been discussed within this report.

Prepared by: Kelly Swift, General Manager,
Community Development, Parks & Recreation

Concurrence: **E. C. Swabey**
Chief Administrative Officer

:ks

Attachment: Appendix A

Appendix A

Summary of Parks, Recreation and Culture Facility Bundles

Facility Bundle	Components
Multi-Use Wellness Complex	Aquatic facility, multipurpose rooms, event space, indoor track, fitness centre, and curling rink
Maple Ridge Leisure Centre	Upgrades to the mechanical, plumbing, and chlorine systems and improved accessibility
Synthetic Fields and Stadium	New synthetic fields, a covered stadium, seating and related amenities
Cultural Facility	Museum, archives, performing arts theatre space, programming and educational spaces, and a tourism information area
Active and Youth Facilities	Youth action park and active youth spaces for emerging sports
Ice Rinks	Retrofit of the third sheet of ice and the addition of a fourth sheet of ice at Planet Ice
Neighbourhood Amenities	A new Albion Community Hall, retrofit of Hammond Hall, and a recreation amenity in Silver Valley that would provide a gathering place
Farm and Agricultural Facilities	Community gardens, support for 4-H facilities and the North Fraser Therapeutic Riding Association
Trail Expansion	A destination trail amenity such as a Blue Mountain or Thornhill "Grind"
Water Play Park	Located in the downtown - Council motion February 22 amended to remove Water Play Park from Appendix A
Dog Parks	Three to five additional dog parks
Jackson Farm	Community consultation and development of a Master Plan to create a community vision for this parkland

