
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: 04 June 2001
File No.: 6140-30

To: Ron Born, City Manager

From: Joe Creron, Parks Manager

Subject: MILL CREEK LINEAR PARK MASTER PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mill Creek Linear Park Master Plan be approved as a guide for the development and management of Mill Creek Linear Park.

BACKGROUND:

In 1999, City Council approved the preparation of a Park Master Plan to guide future park land acquisition, park development and management of Mill Creek Linear Park. Parks & Leisure Services and Planning and Development Services commissioned EBA Engineering Consultants Ltd. to prepare the park master plan for the proposed Mill Creek Linear Park.

MILL CREEK LINEAR PARK MASTER PLAN PROCESS

The purpose of the plan is to establish a vision for the creek corridor and provide strategies for linear park and recreation development and management, habitat restoration, activity programming, and land acquisition. The master plan incorporates the following principles:

- To retain the natural landscape and the environment of the Mill Creek corridor; and,
- To provide opportunity for the citizens of Kelowna to experience the attributes of the study area in a compatible and sustainable manner.

A number of Open House sessions gave the general public an opportunity to provide input to the plan and comment on the linear park concept plan. A public committee was used to review plan goals and objectives. Meetings with a City Staff Steering Committee refined and coordinated inputs from the open houses and other city departments.

Draft copies of the plan were circulated to the Land Reserve Commission and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

The review process identified that Mill Creek requires a management plan to protect natural and cultural resources while at the same time providing park and recreational opportunities. The plan has five (5) proposed management zones based on creek morphology, adjacent land use and anticipated future patterns of land use as outlined in the Official Community Plan.

The plan describes planning principles, design standards, and park management and operations.

MILL CREEK LINEAR PARK PLAN CONTENT

The park master plan sets out recommendations for enhancing existing City-owned assets and provides linear park policies, development standards and future park acquisition guidelines.

Sections 1 to 3 describe existing site conditions adjacent to the proposed linear park corridor. These include land use, zoning, land ownership, topography, geology and soils, drainage, climate, flora, fauna, natural and cultural features, visual quality, potential hazards, and fisheries and water quality.

Section 4 used existing conditions information to establish five management zones, and identified a typical trail cross section in relationship to Riparian Reserve Zones (RRZ) and Riparian Management Zones (RMZ) within each zone. The five management zones are:

- South Central Neighbourhood
- Central Core
- Central Cultivated
- Industrial
- North Cultivated

Sections 5 & 6 detail the design principles and standards for the linear park development and restoration within each management zone. This section further describes actions required in each of the five park management zones and provides guidance with respect to development. Table 4 summarizes the short and long term strategy and proposed phasing.

Active recreation can have a major impact on environmentally sensitive lands if uncontrolled. Likewise, natural areas within an urban environment can also be a problem if not managed. This section determined the appropriateness of various forms of recreation for each park management zone. Certain types of recreation and park use are not appropriate in all park management zones. Each type of use has a different impact on the environment. For instance, equestrian use would be suitable in the Northern Cultivated Management Zone but not in the Urban South-Central.

Section 6 to 8 addresses Future Park development. The plan sets standards for trail development and upgrading, park amenities such as interpretative features and infrastructure.

Section 9, the final section reviews phasing, acquisition and implementation of the proposed linear park. All development by the City of Kelowna will occur through normal budgetary process and in keeping with the 10-year financial plan. This plan is to be used as a guide in protecting the creek corridor and creating the linear park. This information should be used as a tool when reviewing development proposals to ensure there is a balance between urban development and environmental conservation of lands adjacent to the linear park.

The development cost is estimated to be \$2,472,962 to implement. This figure does not include in-stream fish habitat restoration. Associated cost will be prepared with Works and Utilities and will be budgeted accordingly. Phasing will depend on budget availability. Parks Division generally supports the recommendations of the consultant. It will be necessary to increase the operating budget to maintain the linear park as individual segments are developed. This would occur through the budgeting process; however, with the development of partnerships this could be reduced.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

The following actions are planned:

1. Create an internal steering committee Chaired by the Parks Division to oversee implementation.
2. Develop an operational plan to maintain existing park ecosystems.
3. Rehabilitation of existing trail segments to enhance use, improve safety and security and reduce risk of fire.
4. Develop a park security program.
5. Work with federal and provincial ministries to ensure that a balanced approach to the environment is taken with respect to natural areas in urban areas and the safety of the general public.

SUMMARY

This plan has reviewed existing conditions and developed a plan to meet current and future community needs. It protects sensitive environment while allowing recreational opportunities.

Implementation of recommendations will depend on many circumstances: community priorities, budget availability, ability to develop community partnerships, and potential park expansion and/or urban development. Therefore, this plan should be viewed as a long-term plan, which could take at least 20 years to fully implement.

In conclusion, the Parks & Leisure Services Department recommends that the Mill Creek Linear Park Master be approved as a guide for the development and management of one of Kelowna's significant creek corridor.

Joe Creron
Parks Manager

JC/bn
Attach

Cc: Director of Parks & Leisure Services
Director Planning and Development Services
Director of Works and Utilities