



CITY OF MAPLE RIDGE

TO: His Worship Mayor Dan Ruimy
and Members of Council
FROM: Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan Final Report

MEETING DATE: February 28, 2023
FILE NO: 2023-6440-30
MEETING: Workshop

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City's Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) programs, facilities and services are guided by key strategic plans. One of these is the PRC Master Plan (the Plan), which was last developed jointly in 2010 with the City of Pitt Meadows. In 2022, the City embarked on developing a new Plan that would reflect the needs and priorities of Maple Ridge today and into the future.

The following plan and report provides Council with an overview of the approach taken to develop the Plan, some key findings and next steps.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That Council approve the 2023 PRC Master Plan; and,
- 2) That staff prepare an implementation plan for Council's consideration.

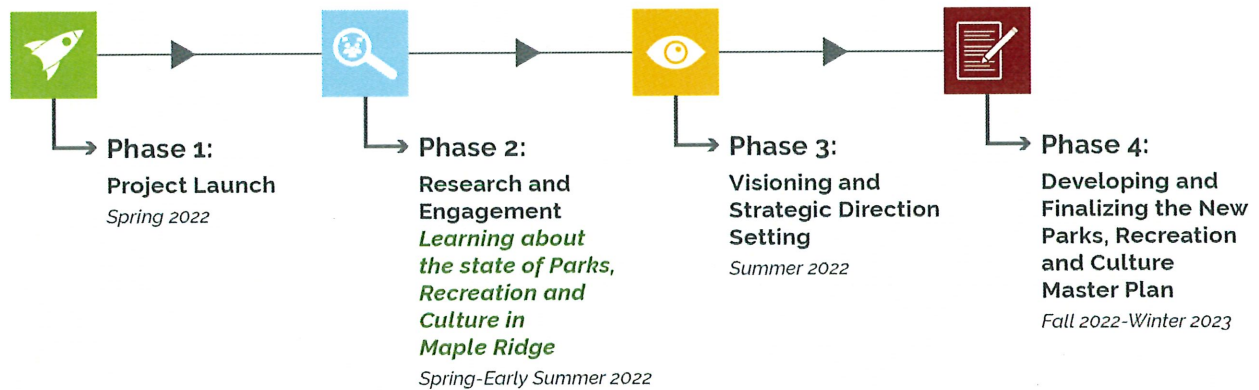
DISCUSSION:

Background Context

In early 2022, the City engaged RC Strategies to support the development of PRC's new Master Plan. Objectives included:

- Understanding the current state of parks, recreation and culture in Maple Ridge;
- Identifying priorities and focus areas;
- Providing guidance of key topics, issues and opportunities; and,
- Identifying areas to optimize service delivery.

The project was broken into four phases and included touch points during phases two, three and four with the Parks, Recreation & Culture Advisory Committee and Council.



The Team’s approach utilized the following components:

- a) *Consolidated Existing Plans and Programs*: Incorporated existing strategies and frameworks into the Plan, to provide detailed approaches on key service areas within PRC and the broader direction of the City. These include the Culture Plan, Youth Strategy, Recreation Facility Gap Analysis, Age-friendly Action Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.
- b) *Infrastructure Investment and Asset Management Review*: Used previous survey results and data sets to develop a short and long-term facility investment strategy to identify recreation facility inventory and guide investments. Also conducted condition assessments of existing infrastructure to identify investments required to extend the lifespan of existing facilities.
- c) *Service Demand Assessment*: Used community engagement and data sets to determine the use, reach and satisfaction of current PRC services and programs within our inventory of existing facilities and offerings including the review of existing policies.
- d) *Community Needs Assessment*: Identified opportunities and determined a future vision for the City’s recreational needs including a trend analysis and baseline infrastructure needs.
- e) *Community and Stakeholder Engagement*: The anchor of the PRC Master Plan was the community’s perspective and vision for the delivery of Parks, Recreation & Culture services achieved through a series of opportunities for residents, stakeholders and partners to participate in engagement sessions.

Engagement Approach and Results:

Through the course of the engagement process, the Team received almost 1,900 touchpoints with the community through a number of channels such as a statistically valid coded resident survey, an open access resident survey, a user group questionnaire, online crowdsourcing, external stakeholder discussions, children and youth engagement and sounding boards and pop-up engagement opportunities at events.

Key findings included:

- Parks, recreation and culture opportunities are highly valued by residents and many physical, wellness and social reasons motivate active participation.

- Satisfaction levels with parks, recreation and culture are generally strong; opportunities exist to improve communications and awareness.
- There is a strong demand for new facility development in Maple Ridge; however, the financial impacts and willingness to pay requires further exploration on a project by project basis.
- Stakeholders and groups recognize that Maple Ridge is growing and evolving; important to engage new residents in activities and focus on equity and inclusion.
- Many user groups are challenged to distinguish between Maple Ridge specific needs and the broader needs of the “Ridge Meadows” area based on sport and recreation groups being comprised of residents from both the City of Pitt Meadows and the City of Maple Ridge.
- Opportunities exist to continue building the cultural capacity and “vibe” of the community.

Community Check-Ins:

In September, staff conducted a community check-in and received over 400 responses from residents. When respondents were asked if their top indoor activity was represented in the top five results, 55% agreed, this increased slightly when asked about outdoor activities to 60%. Although 36% of respondents through the coded survey said they would support a tax increase to fund recreation infrastructure, 49% said yes through the community check-in.

In December, staff published the draft Master Plan and the “What We Heard” Needs Assessment. At this time, a final round of consultation was launched through an online survey. The team received more than 1,200 survey responses. The survey consisted of five questions asking residents whether they agreed with the strategies within the four sections of the Plan, and an open-ended question allowing residents to provide additional comments regarding the Plan.

The strategies within the Parks and Open Spaces section received a 94% agreement level, 91% for the indoor and outdoor recreation facilities strategies, 93% for the arts and culture strategies and 89% for service delivery strategies.

The top five themes from the open-ended question related to:

- 1) Cultural diversity
- 2) Nature/environment/climate change
- 3) Consultative park and facility planning
- 4) More facilities (pools, rinks, covered boxes, stadium, walking tracks)
- 5) Washroom amenities and supports

With this feedback and along with a final presentation to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee (PRCC) on February 8, 2023, the team reviewed the draft Plan to ensure the themes were sufficiently addressed, which resulted in the addition of two strategies:

- 1) Continue to support the services and programs of the Maple Ridge Museum and Archives regarding heritage and archaeological resource, interpretation, conservation, promotion and celebration.

- 2) Ensure that program and activity planning reflects and supports increasing the cultural diversity of the community.

The PRCC also recommended adding a piece regarding the City's philosophy to service delivery and our connections and reliance on community partners. Page 15 of the Plan addresses these comments.

Some feedback related to other City strategies underway, and were passed on to the appropriate departments for review such as all abilities and ages cycling, active transportation and climate change.

Next Steps:

Based on the strategies in the Plan, staff have submitted a number of incremental requests for Council's consideration during Business Planning which include an aquatics feasibility study, arena feasibility study and sponsorship program development. In addition, the City has submitted an ALC exclusion request for a fourth ice sheet at the Planet Ice Complex to address the near term need for another ice sheet as referenced in the Plan. Staff have also begun the process of inventorying parcels of lands sufficient to accommodate new recreation facilities.

Once endorsed by Council, staff will develop an implementation and funding strategy for Council's consideration.

Desired Outcome

Council's endorsement of the 2023 PRC Master Plan and direction for staff to develop an implementation and funding strategy for Council's consideration.

Strategic Alignment

The 2023 PRC Master Plan will replace the existing 2010 Plan, and illustrates how it can drive, and support, other existing strategies such as the Culture Plan, Tourism Strategy and Economic Development strategy.

Citizen/Customer Implications

The Plan provides a roadmap and sets priorities for the City to achieve over the next ten years. There are approaches and tools in the Plan that provide residents and Council with a transparent process for major capital planning (pages 90-91) and service delivery planning (pages 92-94).

Interdepartmental Implications

The implementation and funding strategy will require the support of multiple departments including Finance, Planning, Engineering, Corporate Properties, Economic Development and Communications.

Business Plan/Financial Implications

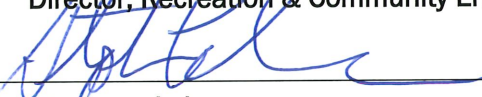
At this time there is no immediate financial implication; however, incremental packages will be brought forward during Business Planning to support some immediate strategies.

CONCLUSION:

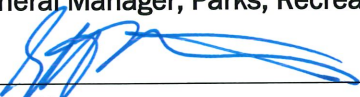
The 2023 PRC Master Plan will guide how services (facilities and programs) are delivered over the next ten years. The Plan will be used by staff and Council to inform decision making and priority setting with the goal of providing all residents with optimal, sustainable and accessible parks, recreation and culture services.



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Concurrence: **Scott Hartman**
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- (A) 2022 Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan
- (B) What We Heard and Needs Assessment Report