

REPORT

Parks and Recreation Department

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: March 11, 2024

From: Dean Gibson
Director- Parks & Recreation
File: 2455038

Item #: 2024-138

Subject: Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Update - Engagement Strategy Phase 1

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council provide feedback on the proposed Engagement Strategy to update the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan; and

THAT Staff proceed with Next Steps as outlined in this report.

PURPOSE

This report provides an overview of, and seeks Council's feedback on, the Engagement Strategy to update the City's Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan.

BACKGROUND

At the [City Council Workshop on May 8, 2023](#), Council provided feedback on the Terms of Reference (TOR) which informed a Request for Proposal (RFP) used to retain a consultant team to develop an update that builds on the 2008 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan (PRCP).

On [December 11, 2023](#), staff provided an update to inform Council that a consultant team had been selected and that the process to update the 2008 PRCP would be launched in early 2024.

With diverse community input and data analysis, the updated PRCP will guide the services provided by the Parks & Recreation Department, and identify who is being

served, how the services are provided, and the relative priority of those services to ensure alignment with the city’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (DEIAR) and Truth and Reconciliation objectives.

This analysis will position and prepare the city for continued population growth as related to development and redevelopment of parks and open spaces; development, renewal, and replacement of recreation facilities; as well as the parks and recreation programs and services that are supported by these spaces and places.

This project will be completed over a period 18-24 months in three distinct phases:

- **Phase 1:** Background Review & Trends Analysis, User Experience Engagement (January - July 2024)
- **Phase 2:** New Westminster Growth Analysis (April - October 2024)
- **Phase 3:** Final Report with Recommendations and Implementation Plan (November -July 2025)

DISCUSSION

Implementation Plan:

This project will include two rounds of broad community engagement, one in Phase 1 and one in Phase 2 of the project (as listed above). The level of engagement, based on the [IAP2](#) (International Association for Public Participation) spectrum, is as follows:

- Phase 1: Inform, Consult, Involve (March-May 2024)
- Phase 2: Inform, Consult (October-December 2024)

Phase 1 community engagement will include a digital survey, and other online engagement tools, on the City’s Be Heard New West platform; five to six pop-up engagements at key parks and recreation locations throughout the city (Queensborough, Downtown, Moody Park, Brow of the Hill, McBride-Sapperton and the təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre); a digital open house; and an all-day family friendly “experiential activity”, which will be paired with the pop-up engagement session at Moody Park. It will also include Indigenous engagement, interest group workshops, and focused interviews.

Plans for Phase 2 community engagement currently include a digital survey, two pop-up engagements and a digital open house. This plan will be further refined after Phase 1 is completed and the engagement results are analyzed.

Goals and Objectives:

Key goals and objectives of the Phase 1 community engagement include:

- Identify key community needs related to:
 - Maintaining or increasing existing programs, spaces and services, where demand requires it.

- Identifying new, emerging, and overlooked trends and demands among New Westminster’s increasingly diverse population, as interest segmentation continues to increase among different demographic groups.
- Identifying programs, spaces and services where demand has declined.
- Gather input from vulnerable, marginalized, and underserved populations to inform the PRCP and determine service level outcomes that balance community needs with available funding.
- Ensure the PRCP reflects community needs and interests.
- Solicit input from a range of interest groups, as well as considerable input from the general public, with a focus on reaching a diversity of demographics and voices.

Awareness Building:

Key objectives of the Engagement Strategy are to create a high level of public and interest group awareness about the PRCP update, together with broad, balanced, and inclusive engagement. The following are proposed outreach mediums to reach a broad cross-section of New Westminster residents, stakeholders, and other potential parks and recreation users:

1. Social Media
2. City Website
3. Local Media
4. Interactive Signage
5. Digital monitors in City facilities
6. Pop-Up Engagement
7. Email
8. Posters and Flyers

Audiences:

Interest groups include individuals and groups with an interest or stake in the development of the New Westminster PRCP. While the City wishes to hear from as many New Westminster residents and potential facility users as possible, a preliminary list of over 140 key interest groups has been identified for additional, targeted engagement including (but not exclusive to):

1. Outdoor and indoor sport and recreation groups
2. Representatives of vulnerable and seldom heard communities
3. Representatives of youth and seniors groups
4. Indigenous organizations
5. Community organizations
6. Resident associations
7. Tourism organizations
8. Regional organizations (e.g. Fraser Health Authority, Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, etc.)

9. Environmental organizations
10. Business associations
11. Educational institutions (e.g. School District 40, Douglas College, Urban Academy, etc.)

Power Mapping:

With this list, a power mapping analysis was conducted to assess degree of priority; perception of the project and outcomes; and likely level of influence on the project. The outcome of this exercise will help inform messaging that aligns with the needs, interests, and aspirations of the various audiences to motivate participation. In addition, this information helps the consultants understand each interest groups connection to the project for communication purposes, apply this knowledge during focused interviews, creating more nuanced and meaningful conversations.

Reaching a Diverse Population:

A diversifying community, coupled with changing trends in Parks & Recreation needs and interests, is anticipated to require different service offerings than those in the previous PRCP 2008. To gain a clear understanding of these needs, engagement will need to go beyond the current users of Parks & Recreation services.

To gain a clear understanding of community needs, the consultants will ask those that we are engaging if there is anyone else they'd suggest speaking to, while during workshops, we'll ask, "Who's not in the room?" These strategies, coupled with a range of broad engagement opportunities, including online surveys, supported with posters; pop-ups and digital engagement, as well as focused engagement methods, will ensure that we collect input from the many distinct user groups who use - or could use – Parks & Recreation services.

To ensure an equitable and balanced approach, the consultants will consider current user needs and interests together with those who have not previously been involved to the same degree in Parks & Recreation activities. This will be coupled with assessing the needs of various user groups by cross-referencing data on service levels and participation, while reflecting on emerging Parks & Recreation trends. This will help ensure that the findings and recommendations are grounded in both equity and data.

Questions to Council:

During the March 11, 2024 Council workshop session, Council will receive a presentation regarding the PRCP engagement strategy and are invited to provide feedback on the following questions:

- A. Are there any gaps in the proposed approach to engaging interest groups and the broader community?
- B. Are there any additional key interest groups that need to be considered in this process?
- C. Any additional feedback on the proposed Engagement Strategy?

NEXT STEPS

Pending Council feedback, detailed engagement planning, material development and logistics coordination will continue with active engagement with the community commencing in April. It is expected that active engagement will extend from April to late May 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2024 - 2028 Capital Plan includes \$250K to complete the PRCP update. Staff anticipate the project to complete in 18-24 months.

To leverage efficiency and reduce costs, staff proposed to engage the same consultant to support engagement and analysis of a new artificial turf field. This will increase the consulting contract by \$70K to \$320K. These additional costs will be funded by the budget of the artificial turf field project in the current Capital Plan. This work will proceed separately from the PRCP project.

Following an initial analysis of possible locations for a new field, community input will help provide context for the accompanying technical feasibility study. This data will help determine the location of a future new field. Council will be further updated on the process, timeline and budget allocation in a subsequent report.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Interdepartmental liaison has occurred between staff from Parks & Recreation and the Manager of Public Engagement in the Office of the CAO. The Finance Department has reviewed the Financial Implications section of this report.

OPTIONS

The following are options for Council’s consideration:

- 1. That Council provide feedback on the proposed Engagement Strategy to update the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan; and
- 2. That staff proceed with Next Steps as outlined in this report; or
- 3. Provide alternate direction to staff.

Options #1 and #2 are recommended.

CONCLUSION

Through an inclusive, meaningful and fun engagement process, the PRCP update will better equip the Parks & Recreation Department to respond meaningfully to the evolving needs of a growing community while continuing to advance equity, connectivity and access to parks and recreation services for all.

APPROVALS

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