

DATE OF MEETING MAY 17, 2023

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SUBJECT FERN PARK PARTNERS IN PARKS (PIP) PROJECT UPDATE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To inform the Finance and Audit Committee of the change in scope of the Fern Park Partners in Parks (PIP) Project.

BACKGROUND

Fern Park is a .24 hectare park located off Meredith Road in the Beban/Northfield neighbourhood of Nanaimo. This park was acquired in 1988 through subdivision. The park is zoned PRC-2, and was designated as such in anticipation of active recreation amenities. The park is situated in a transitioning area with residential, institutional, industrial and agricultural land uses nearby.

The neighbourhood has explored development of this greenspace through the City's PIP program a few times over the years with no implementation. Expecting this to be a neighbourhood park through development application, money has been committed from rezoning community-contribution funds for development of Fern Park over the years, and is held in deferred revenue.

In 2018, with many new residents and families recently moving into the neighbourhood, a request for a local playground through the Partners in Parks (PIP) process was explored, including park improvements such as a playground, shade trees, picnic tables and formalized trail. Council allocated \$25,000 to this work in 2018. Since this initial meeting the neighbourhood residents and priorities have changed and no work has been undertaken.

The PIP program was initiated by City Council in 1982 to develop neighbourhood parks and projects. Each year, approximately \$100,000 is budgeted to the program and neighbourhood representatives work with City staff to develop their projects to apply to have a portion of the funds allocated to their project.

DISCUSSION

Since the PIP program restarted in the fall, 2022 City staff have contacted the neighbourhood group in support of this project finding that some have moved away from the area and the formal neighbourhood group has disbanded. There are still some community members who wish to see a developed park in this area.

Given the status of the group and the recent increases in pricing, staff plan to utilise the initial proposed site plan and phase the project. This would mean that a formalized trail, park bench and

picnic table would be constructed and installed in Phase 1 and the development of a playground, if there is a desire, could occur in the future.

The anticipated cost of this work is \$45,000. Funds to be used are already allocated to this project and consists of \$17,000 from 2018 PIP funds that were carried forward and \$28,000 from Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) earmarked for this park. The remaining \$8,000 of PIP funds that had been allocated in 2018 will be returned to the 2023 PIP unallocated fund and made available for other groups.

CONCLUSION

The initial phase of the park improvements would allow for pedestrian and active transportation connectivity between neighbourhoods while avoiding busy roads. It will also create an opportunity for community gatherings in a natural setting, with an open play area or location for quiet picnics in the park amongst the trees and green space.

SUMMARY POINTS

- \$25,000 of PIP funds were awarded to the Fern Park PIP project in 2019.
- The PIP program was paused in 2020 and the group disbanded. There is still some community interest in developing the park.
- Staff plan to utilize the initial proposed site plan and phase the project.
- \$8,000 of PIP funding will be returned to the 2023 PIP unallocated fund.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Fern Neighbourhood PIP Proposal 2018
Attachment B: Fern Park PIP Proposal Site Plan 2018
Attachment C: Fern Park PIP Proposal Site Plan 2023

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