



Governance and Priorities Committee

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Topic: Trails Strategy Plan Request for Proposal Status Report

Introduction:

Administration provides background information and projected timelines regarding the Trails Strategy Plan "Request for Proposal" for Parkland County to be accepted as information.

Facts (Background)

Parkland County, Agriculture, Community and Protective Services will be coordinating the release of the Request for Proposal (RFP) in conjunction with the budget approval and long-term direction of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan (PRCMP 2017) trail development and trail network goals.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to obtain proposals from qualified consultants to conduct a review and develop Parkland County's Trails Strategy Plan. This Plan will provide Parkland County with long term direction with regards to the provision of a systematic approach to trail development and creating an integrated trail network for County residents and visitors to the region.

Project Overview

Specifically, Parkland County is seeking a Trails Strategy Plan with an integrated countywide trails network that clearly outlines direction for the next 20 years, with a more detailed focus on the next 5 – 10 years.

Parkland County is seeking proposals from a qualified consulting company to provide the Trails Strategy Plan by issuing a Request for Proposal in late July or early August of 2022.

The demand for trail development in Canada, Alberta and Parkland County is increasing.

Recent studies by Statistics Canada, the Province of Alberta, River Valley Alliance and most recently with our own Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan have all identified trail related activities such as walking and hiking as some of the most popular types of activities.

Trail use offers a wide range of benefits to trail users, communities, government and the environment. These benefits can include:

- Improved physical and mental health and related reduced health care costs
- Increased awareness of the environment
- Social interaction and increased sense of community
- An alternative method of transportation
- Overall Enjoyment

Parkland County's recently completed Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan found that non-motorized trails, motorized trails, cross country ski trails and equestrian were indicated as priorities for outdoor development. The PRCMP recommends that the County expand the supply of non-motorized trails on an opportunity basis. Guidelines and trail development standards were also created for when this development on an opportunity basis does occur.

The County faces different challenges than its urban neighbors in developing trail systems due to the vast geography and with the wide distribution of population in the County. Immense potential exists with a substantial inventory of County owned reserves, potential destinations hubs such as existing parks and hamlets, the River Valleys, historical features and existence of potential partners including communities, residents, developers and internal Departments.

Parkland County can take a more proactive role in fostering opportunities for trail development rather than waiting for those opportunities to present themselves.

The Plan

The primary product for this RFP is a Parkland County Trails Strategy Plan considering our surrounding municipalities, partners, adjacent parks and/or trail connections that contains among other key points, a detailed plan of how to best leverage existing trails, identify gaps and barriers, meet with, and understand public and other stakeholder usages and needs, and clearly outline and recognize future requirements.

The final plan will provide a complete inventory of all existing trails, potential staging areas, potential future trail linkages, identify gaps and include connectivity to potential future trails to create a trail network that encompasses all 6 Divisions of Parkland County.

Schedule

Parkland County anticipates project start up to be **September of 2022** following award and contract execution with project conclusion by **May of 2023**.

Strategic Focus and Objectives:

The overall goal of the Strategy is to develop a plan guiding development of a countywide trail network in Parkland County that clearly outlines the direction and priorities for the next 20 years, with a more detailed focus on the next 5-10 years.

Objectives of the Strategy are to provide the County with:

- Conceptual details on proposed County Wide Trail linkages
- Conceptual details on Proposed local (subdivision, rural centre, industrial) trail connections
- Recommendations on potential users of trail system
- Conceptual details on access to the three River Valley Systems within the County
- Costs/Priorities for development/phasing of trail network development
- Triggers for when future trail development can/should occur
- Identify roles of the County, Developers and Community in the development of and ongoing maintenance of trails
- Identify trail linkages and alignments for the trail planning and developments with adjacent municipalities, environmental parks, river valley areas and provincial level parks including:
 - Lois Holes Centennial Provincial Park Management Plan Area
 - Hamlet of Entwistle, Pembina River Campground and Tubing Area
 - Wabamun Lake and Village Area
 - Lands adjacent to Wagner Natural Area/Acheson Business Park

Analysis:

The primary deliverable for this RFP is a Parkland County Trails Strategy Plan considering our surrounding municipalities, partners, adjacent parks and/or trail connections that contains among other key points, a detailed plan of how to best leverage existing trails, identify gaps and barriers, meet with, and understand public and other stakeholder usages and needs, and clearly outline and recognize future requirements including a specific layout for an interdivisional and integrated trail network.

The RFP will provide four phases of work that the consultant will deliver in preparing the plan.

Phase One - Analysis and Review:

Successful Proponents will be required to include and conduct the following as part of the development of the Trails Strategy Plan:

1. Overarching Analysis and Review
2. Detailed Analysis and Review

Phase Two - Community Engagement:

The Consultant will provide meaningful public and other stakeholder involvement. The success of the public involvement and engagement process phase of the TSMP will be achieved through meeting the following goals:

- Ensuring the style of engagement is inclusive
- Providing meaningful opportunities for public and other stakeholder input and participation
- Making all relevant information about the planning process readily available to the public
- Presenting the information to the public and other stakeholders in a clear, understandable and concise manner
- Making available for review in the document all public and other stakeholder input gained during the planning process
- Accurately and objectively recording and assessing the public and other stakeholder input so it can be used to improve or enhance the final Trails Strategy Plan.

Phase Three - Key Findings and Strategic Directions and Recommendations:

The consultant shall summarize the results in terms of the strategic short-, medium- and long-term directions or developments and provide recommendations, with priorities identified upon which the Trail Strategy Master Plan will be prepared.

The consultant shall present the Strategic Directions and Recommendations to the Parkland County Project Steering Committee to review, provide input and discuss the findings.

In addition, the consultant in conjunction with Administrative Staff will present an update to the Parkland County Governance Committee(PCGC) and Council.

Phase Four - Development of the Trails Strategy Plan:

Develop a draft Trails Strategy Master Plan including an implementation strategy, financial implications that satisfies the scope of work.

Provide a presentation of the draft Trails Strategy Master Plan to the Steering Committee, Governance of Priorities Committee, Community Sustainability Committee and solicit community input.

The Consultant will finalize the Trails Strategy Plan based on feedback received from the Steering Committee, Governance and Priorities Committee, Community Sustainability Committee and community engagements.

The finalized Trails Strategy Plan will be prepared and provided to the Steering Committee at the completion of the project. In addition, a presentation of the TSP will be delivered to the Parkland County Governance Committee and Council outlining key aspects of the project.

Alternatives:

Conclusion/Summary:

In conclusion, the Administration supports the release of the Trails Strategy Plan RFP as per previous budget and project approval.

Develop a Trails Strategy Plan including an implementation strategy, financial implications that satisfies the scope of work. The plan will include, but not limited to:

- Vision, Outcomes and Guiding Principles.
- Data collection and evaluation.
- Recommendations.
- Short-, Medium- and Long-Term strategies to improve the existing and link the future trail developments into an integrated County-Wide Trail Network with intermunicipal as well as relevant Provincial or Federal park/trail connections;
- Strategies/Objectives to solve current challenges and identify future opportunities; and incorporate key findings to enhance the strategy for the implementation of the trail network; including action plan and costing; funding and grants recommendations.
- Partnerships and Collaborations Framework.

- Performance Measurements.
- Trail Management, Maintenance and Safety Recommendations.
- Prioritization Framework Matrix.

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