



# REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: CS-BRD-352

From: Community Services

Date: November 7, 2024

**Subject: North Peace Regional Park – Feasibility Study Recommendations**

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## **RECOMMENDATION: [Corporate Unweighted]**

That the Regional Board review the recommendations presented in the “North Peace Regional Park Master Plan” which provide guidance for decision making related to the North Peace Regional Park in the following focus areas:

- Facility Development – Focus Area 1 (Recommendations A to O);
- Program Development – Focus Area 2 (Recommendations A to E); and
- Service Delivery Enhancements – Focus Area 3 (Recommendations A to I);

further, that an implementation plan for future park development and improvement be prepared based on the recommendations in the North Peace Regional Park Master Plan that allows for consideration of each recommendation individually on a project-by-project basis and that the implementation plan be presented to the Regional Parks Committee who will recommend action to the Regional Board.

## **BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:**

The North Peace Regional Park, also known as the North Peace Fall Fairgrounds, (the Park) is a beloved community asset that is well known as the home of the North Peace Fall Fair. The Park is owned by the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) and operated by the North Peace Fall Fair Society (the Society).

A Master Plan for the Park has been created to provide high-level guidance in making decisions related to the facility that best meet the needs of the community and include asset management and risk management considerations. The project entailed conducting extensive community and partner engagement and review of applicable plans, strategies and reports. The recommendations in this report relate to the ongoing operations, maintenance, and capital improvements. Implementation of the plan will take up to 10 years to action and will require annual monitoring and strategic resourcing.

On January 11, 2024, the Board passed the following resolution;

*MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,*

*That the Regional Board approve that the Board Chair work with the Area ‘B’ Director, PRRD staff, and the North Peace Fall Fair Society once the feasibility studies have been completed to determine the future of the North Peace Regional Park.*

A meeting was held with the Society, Area B Director, Area B Alternate Director, and Board Chair on October 15, 2024, to receive the draft Master Plan presentation, and to discuss the implementation of the plan. This meeting resulted in consensus from the attendees that;

- The Park should be transitioned from a regionally funded park to an Area B funded community park to reflect the special importance of the facility to Area B residents;
- The Park should continue to be operated by the North Peace Fall Fair Society and that the Society’s scope should include ensuring access, public programming, rentals, events, maintenance, adherence to regulatory requirements, provision of input to the PRRD for capital development and contribute generally towards the implementation of the plan.
- The existing Use and Occupancy Agreement be updated to reflect the commitments of each party to the Park and;
- Implementation of the plan be developed in association with the North Peace Fall Fair Society to clearly identify the annual priorities, funding strategy, operations, and site-wide capital plan.

Staff recommended that operating model options, facility, program, and service delivery considerations within this plan are adopted, prioritized for implementation and brought back to the Regional Parks Committee for recommendation to the Board in November 2025, which will provide guidance on the strategic direction of the North Peace Regional Park for the lifespan of the implementation plan and beyond. Approval of the North Peace Regional Park Master Plan will provide staff with foundational direction for the Park. Some of the recommendations outlined below are targeted and required, while others are for consideration. As such, detailed costing will continually be brought back to the Board for approval on a per project basis.

Report recommendations are broken into three categories, including Facility Development, Program Development, and Service Delivery Enhancements. A summary of the recommendations below can be found starting on page 63 of the report. The recommendations below are intended to improve the operations and management of the grounds as a whole. Should the plan be adopted, some of the recommendations are intended to be completed by the Society, should they continue to operate, such as development of a safety plan, expansion of programming and rentals, improvement of record keeping, and development of a fundraising plan. Targeted recommendations and their associated responsibility for implementation have been further defined in the tables below, for reference. It should also be noted that specific opportunities to advance the below recommendations, in many cases, may serve as opportunities for a shared approach through project partnership with the operating society.

<b>Focus Area 1 - Facility Development</b>		<b>Responsibility</b>
1.A.1	Consider upgrading the Adeline Kelly Building to a public occupancy building (study)	PRRD
1.B.1-3	Study options to address water needs on-site	PRRD
1.C.1	Develop a safety plan	Society
1.D.1	Replace and Enhance the Playground	PRRD
1.E.1	Upgrade the electrical system	PRRD
1.F.1	Accessibility enhancements	PRRD
1.G.1-2	Upgrade animal barns	PRRD
1.H.1-2	Improve capacity to host weddings	PRRD
1.I.1	Develop a perimeter trail	PRRD
1.J.1	Consider upgrading the Pineview Hall	PRRD
1.K.1	Improve Camping Facilities	PRRD
1.L.1	Repurpose the baseball field into accessible parking	PRRD

1.M.1	Develop an asset management plan	PRRD
1.N.1-	Remove buildings that are at the end of their useful life	PRRD
1.O.1-2	Enhance destination and directional signage	PRRD

<b>Focus Area 2 – Program Development</b>		<b>Responsibility</b>
2.A.1	Continue to host the Fall Fair and 4-H Achievement Days	Society/PRRD
2.B.1-2	Expand public programming	Society/PRRD
2.C.1-2	Expand agricultural programming	Society/PRRD
2.D.1-2	Expand rentals	Society/PRRD
2.E.1-4	Enhance interpretive elements	Society/PRRD

<b>Focus Area 3 – Service Delivery Enhancements</b>		<b>Responsibility</b>
3.A.1	Invest resources to support implementation	PRRD/Society
3.B.1	Update the Use and Occupancy License Agreement	PRRD/Society
3.C.1	Enhance communication and collaboration	PRRD/Society
3.D.1	Develop an operational plan	Society
3.E.1-2	Improve record keeping	Society
3.F.1	Develop a fundraising plan	Society
3.G.1-2	Improve marketing	Society
3.H.1	Review zoning	PRRD
3.I.1-2	Future planning and evaluation	PRRD/Society

Following the meeting on October 15, 2024, the Society provided the attached letter stating their initial preferences and support for the plan, which includes in summary:

- Support to transition to a Community Park (Area B Funded), and continue to have the property Society operated;
- Capital Priority #1 - Adeline Kelly building upgraded with a kitchen;
- Capital Priority #2 - Potable water;
- Concern #1 – Logistics of public access, as recommended in the report;
- Request to the Regional District to consider a position (staff or contracted) to work with the Society to manage the Park; and
- Request to create a 3–5-year plan.

As above, the stated capital priorities for the Society for the long-term operations of the grounds are to upgrade the Adeline Kelly Building from Farm Storage classification to a Public Occupancy classification, and to establish potable water appropriate for the grounds.

At a very high level estimation, the capital cost for these two projects could be up to \$4,500,000, based on similar projects investigated at the PRRD over the last number of years. Should the entire cost of these capital projects be requisitioned in one year (based on 2024 assessment) the impact to taxpayers is shown below. Tax rates have been shown if the requisition comes from the Regional Parks function or the Community Parks – Area B function. The requisition amount of \$4,500,000 through the Regional Parks function is significantly over the requisition limit for this function.

	Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of Requisition	Tax Rate per \$230,000 assessed value (Average Residential Assessment in Area B)
Area B – Community Parks	\$0.4426	\$101.80
Regional Parks	\$0.1416	\$32.57

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

**STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:**

- Asset and Infrastructure Management

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):**

The report outlines some costs related to the implementation of the plan. Based on high level cost estimates received as part of the capital improvement recommendations and previous investigations on site, the plan may cost up to \$7,175,000 in capital improvements to implement. These are capital costs only, and operating costs are not yet known. The cost estimates below do not include costs related to project development, engineering or architectural and will need to be determined. Of course, the costs listed could vary based on the approved scope of the project – for example, if the animal barns are determined to be repaired, the cost could be much less than if the animal barns were rebuilt.

Building/Asset	Capital Upgrade Suggested	Estimated Cost
Adeline Kelly	Upgrade to A2 from F2, including kitchen	\$500,000 not including engineering/architectural design
Potable water onsite	Explore options to drill new well and provide water treatment or install extra cisterns for potable water provision	\$500,000 to \$4 million
Playground	Replace and enhance	\$350,000
Electrical	Upgrade electrical site-wide, install additional lighting throughout for safety	\$50,000 (estimate \$500-\$1000 per pole, plus wiring, trenching, new panels, etc.)
Accessibility	Accessible washroom, more accessible seating and hard surface paths	\$500,000
Animal barns	Upgrades and safety considerations for deteriorating buildings, including foundations and roof material/eaves	\$1 million (if barns need to be constructed rather than repaired)
Develop a perimeter trail	Develop a trail that goes around the exterior of the grounds (estimated 1,500m)	\$225,000

Pineview Hall	Upgrade foundation and safety systems	\$150,000
Improve Camping Facilities	Formalized camping areas, picnic tables and fire pits in approved areas.	\$150,000
Repurpose Baseball Field into Accessible Parking	Remove the baseball field and add accessible parking spots in its place.	\$50,000
Remove Buildings at the end of their useful life	Assess and remove any buildings that are not in safe condition.	\$150,000
Enhance Destination and Directional Signage	New Park signage, fire safety plan signage, maps, etc.	\$50,000

### COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

### OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

#### Transition of Park from Regional to Community

A key purpose of this report was to identify whether the site is more appropriately funded through a regional function or a community function, and if it was possible to transition these grounds from a Regional facility to a Community Facility.

The land in question is dedicated as a Regional District Park but may be classified as either a Regional Park or a Community Park, by way of resolution by the Regional Board. The important distinction between a Community Park and Regional Park is in how the operations, maintenance and/or capital improvements are funded. Should the Board choose to consider these grounds as a Community Park, funding would be requisitioned from Area B, and not through a Region wide service as is currently the case.

Authorization to provide a Community Park service is currently granted through a Supplementary Letters Patent, which needs to be updated to a Community Park Establishment Bylaw. This may happen before or after the Park is funded through Area B.

#### Attachments:

1. NPFFS – Letter to PRRD - Feasibility Study - October 2024
2. NPFFS – Use and Occupancy License Agreement – March 2020
3. North Peace Regional Park Master Plan - October 29, 2024