



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of May 3rd, 2018

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** March 26, 2018
From: Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Facilities
Subject: Cecelia Ravine Park Improvement Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the Park Improvement Plan for Cecelia Ravine Park (Appendix A); and
2. Amend the 2018 Financial Plan to increase the project budget by \$600,000, with funding from the Parks and Greenways Acquisition Reserve.
3. Direct staff to include \$49,000 for ongoing operating costs within the 2019 Financial Plan to be funded from general property tax revenue.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cecelia Ravine Park is the largest park in the Burnside-Gorge neighbourhood. The park provides a variety of recreational opportunities, along with one of the largest natural areas in the City park system.

In 2016, the City purchased property next to the western portion of the park, with funds in a reserve established through the sale of Ellis Street Park (2009). The new property is located on Cecelia Road and Washington Avenue, totalling 0.22 hectares (0.5 acres), and expanding Cecelia Ravine Park to 4.07 hectares.

Throughout 2017, staff worked closely with the community to develop a design for the newly acquired property that aligns with key objectives outlined in the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan, Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan, Cecelia Ravine Park Management Plan, and Urban Forest Master Plan. The proposed Park Improvement Plan is attached as Appendix A.

The park design consists of:

- A larger, more accessible, playground;
- Community gathering areas, picnic facilities and open green space;
- An improved outdoor fitness area;
- A new parking lot for vehicles;
- Enhanced furnishings, including bike racks, shade structure, pathway lighting, and seating;
- New public washroom;
- An upgraded, accessible pathway connecting the western area of the park to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and eastern area of Cecelia Ravine Park; and,
- Enhanced tree canopy coverage and native planting areas.

The estimated cost to complete the park upgrades is \$1,568,700 Class D (preliminary) cost estimate with 25% contingency. A total of \$968,000 is available through the reserve fund previously set aside for the purchase and development of new parkland within the Burnside neighbourhood. Staff recommend the acquiring the remaining funds (\$600,000) necessary to implement the Plan from the Parks and Greenways Acquisition Reserve Fund, which currently contains approximately \$2,700,000.

The project timeline below illustrates the current schedule and anticipated future phases, pending Council approval.



With Council approval, staff will complete the necessary detailed design work and prepare for construction to commence in the summer of 2018. The Plan is anticipated to be implemented by the end of 2018.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for park improvements and associated budget for an expansion to Cecelia Ravine Park.

BACKGROUND

Cecelia Ravine Park is the largest park in the Burnside-Gorge Neighbourhood and contains one of the largest natural areas in the City park system, featuring a creek, woodland areas, open meadows, and steep sided ravines. The park also offers a number of community amenities, including a bike skills park, basketball court, playground, community garden, fitness equipment, and numerous secondary trails. The park is bisected by the Galloping Goose Regional Trail, which is maintained by the Capital Regional District.

In 2016, the City acquired new property adjacent to the western portion of Cecelia Ravine Park, expanding the park space by 0.5 acres. This new parkland was acquired using funds from the disposition of the Ellice Street Park. The location of this parcel of land is considered strategically valuable from the perspective of parks and recreation in this neighbourhood. This quality green space is adjacent to the popular Galloping Goose Trail, close to the Burnside Gorge Community Centre, and offers an opportunity to deliver expanded public spaces and amenities within Cecelia Ravine Park.

The western portion of park is physically separated from the remainder of Cecelia Ravine Park by the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and the steep ravine topography. There is currently a trail connecting these areas; however, it is steep and particularly difficult to navigate for individuals in wheelchairs or those with mobility challenges.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Design Process

A cross-departmental working group, led by the Parks team, developed the Park Improvement Plan. The team consulted with residents as well as multiple experts to ensure the Plan meets community needs and is achievable within available resources. The proposed features are drawn from three sources: guiding City policy documents, public engagement feedback, and a review of existing conditions and operational impacts.

1. Guiding Documents

Staff reviewed a variety of guiding documents, including the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan, Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan, Cecelia Ravine Park Management Plan, and the Urban Forest Master Plan.

The documents contain multiple recommendations relevant to Cecelia Ravine Park. Common themes include creating safe and accessible amenities and infrastructure, refreshing the existing amenities and infrastructure with a focus on respect for and restoration of natural spaces, and attracting citizens via accessibility improvements and a variety of aesthetic changes.

2. Public Engagement

The City hosted two rounds of public engagement in 2017. The first round collected general feedback and ideas about improvements to Cecelia Ravine Park and the new property. The second solicited input on a proposed draft design that had been developed based on the feedback from the first phase of engagement. Overall, the plan received widespread support through the engagement. Items noted as important by the community included updating the playground and including natural play elements and updating pathways as a priority. The public felt strongly that the improvements should feel safe for everyone and include multiple access points, good lighting and clear sightlines. A full engagement summary report is attached as Appendix B.

3. Review of Existing Conditions

Several potential constraints were identified over the past several months, allowing for solution development and risk mitigation in advance of detailed design. Some of the key challenges which must be addressed include underground utilities, multiple grade changes, and encroachment on CRD property.

Park Improvement Plan

The objective of the Cecelia Ravine Park Improvement Plan is to accommodate the park expansion in a manner that benefits the community, offers engaging and inclusive experiences, and complements existing park features. The Plan consists of both new and improved elements:

- Playground Improvement: A larger, more accessible playground with a mix of natural and structured play opportunities and accessible surfacing. Drawing inspiration from the nearby Cecelia Creek, a "creek-themed" play area is planned, which may include elements such as creek inspired imaginative play, or a water play channel and pump.
- Outdoor Fitness Area Improvement: An updated outdoor fitness area with a wider range of equipment and rubber surfacing to complement the activities provided at the community

centre.

- Improved Amenities: Improvements to internal pathways, bicycle racks, lighting, a community picnic area with a shade structure, new furnishings, and an open grass area will facilitate social gathering and informal recreation.
- Accessible Public Washroom: A new washroom adjacent will serve visitors to the western portion of the park.
- Cecelia Road Pathway Improvement: An accessible pathway will add a significant enhancement to the existing connection between Cecelia Road and the Galloping Goose Regional Trail.
- Enhanced canopy coverage and native planting areas: New tree planting locations will expand canopy coverage and provide shade to the playground and seating areas. Native planting areas will be used to enhance park edges and provide habitat value.
- Parking: A small parking area with space for 4-5 cars will serve the expanded park and improve accessibility.

Further detail on the Park Improvement Plan for the western portion of Cecelia Ravine Park is attached as Appendix A.

Project Budget

As shown in the table below, the total cost estimate for the proposed park improvements outlined in the Plan is \$1,568,700. Council has already approved \$968,000 as noted in the 2018 Financial Plan, which represents the remainder of the \$2 million originally allocated to acquire and develop additional parkland in the Burnside neighbourhood. The remaining \$600,000 required for implementation may be allocated from within the Parks and Greenways Acquisition Reserve Fund, which currently has approximately \$2,700,000 available.

Cecelia Ravine Park Improvements – Class D (Preliminary) Cost Estimate	Cost Estimate
Hard and Soft Landscaping (paving, fencing, bollards, plantings)	\$167,000
Park Amenities (furnishings, playground/fitness equipment)	\$290,000
Lighting	\$70,000
Washroom (including servicing)	\$250,000
Cecelia Road Pathway	\$384,000
Construction Cost	\$1,162,000
Design Services (10%)	\$116,200
Construction Contingency (25%)	\$290,500
TOTAL 2018 Estimated Costs	\$1,568,700

Operating Impacts

As a result of the increased size and amenities the future park will offer, staff have estimated a slight increase to the operational budget. The table below provides a summary of these incremental costs, which will take effect following completion of construction, in 2019.

Cecelia Ravine Park Incremental Operating Costs	Cost
Landscaping Maintenance	\$10,000
Maintenance of Assets and Amenities (furnishings, playground/fitness equipment, lighting, pathway maintenance)	\$15,000
Washroom Maintenance	\$24,000
Impact to Operating Budget (2019)	\$49,000

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

With Council's approval of the improvement plan and associated budget, staff will begin detailed design work, with construction anticipated to take place from August until the end of 2018.

Implementation Timeline	
Detailed design and procurement	March – July 2018
Construction	August – December 2018
Community celebration	Spring 2019

Accessibility Impact Statement

Site accessibility has been a primary consideration of this design exercise. The proposed improvements include pathways and adjacent parking, accessible play opportunities, lighting, seating, and shade. Updating the Cecelia Road pathway will result in a new accessible entry point between the eastern and western park areas, addressing the obstacle posed by the steep ravine.

2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan

The recommended option is consistent with Objective 8: Enhance and Steward Public Spaces, Green Spaces, and Food Systems.

Impacts to Financial Plan

As noted above the cost estimate for the park and pathway upgrades requires funds not currently approved in the 2018 Financial Plan. Staff recommend allocating the additional \$600,000 from the Parks and Greenways Acquisition Reserve Fund.

The operational budget increase will be included in the 2019 Financial Plan.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The proposed park improvements supports actions in the Official Community Plan under Goal 9 – Parks and Recreation

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed plan described above will provide the residents of this community with a high-quality park expansion that is accessible, inclusive, and aligns with the priorities of recent City policies. Staff recommend that Council approve the Park Improvement Plan for Cecelia Ravine Park.

Respectfully submitted,



Leigh Campbell
Manager

Parks Planning, Design and Development



Thomas Soulliere
Director

Parks, Recreation and Facilities

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


April 26, 2018

List of Attachments

Appendix A: Cecelia Ravine Park Improvement Plan

Appendix B: Engagement Summary