



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of June 27, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 20, 2019
From: Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities
Subject: Project Update: Waterfront Public Realm Initiatives

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the public realm projects along the waterfront area, associated with the replacement of the Johnson Street Bridge. The scope consists of the following project components:

- "Former S-Curve Lands" (Songhees Park Expansion)
- Boulevard Landscaping
- "Triangle Island"
- Janion Plaza
- Northern Junk Plaza
- David Foster Harbour Pathway (DFHP) Pedestrian Underpass

This report focuses on key activities and progress since the last update to Council in December 2017. A related staff report focused on the proposed public art for the Triangle Island space is also being presented for Council consideration.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the progress of the various waterfront public realm improvements, in the areas around the new Johnson Street Bridge.

BACKGROUND

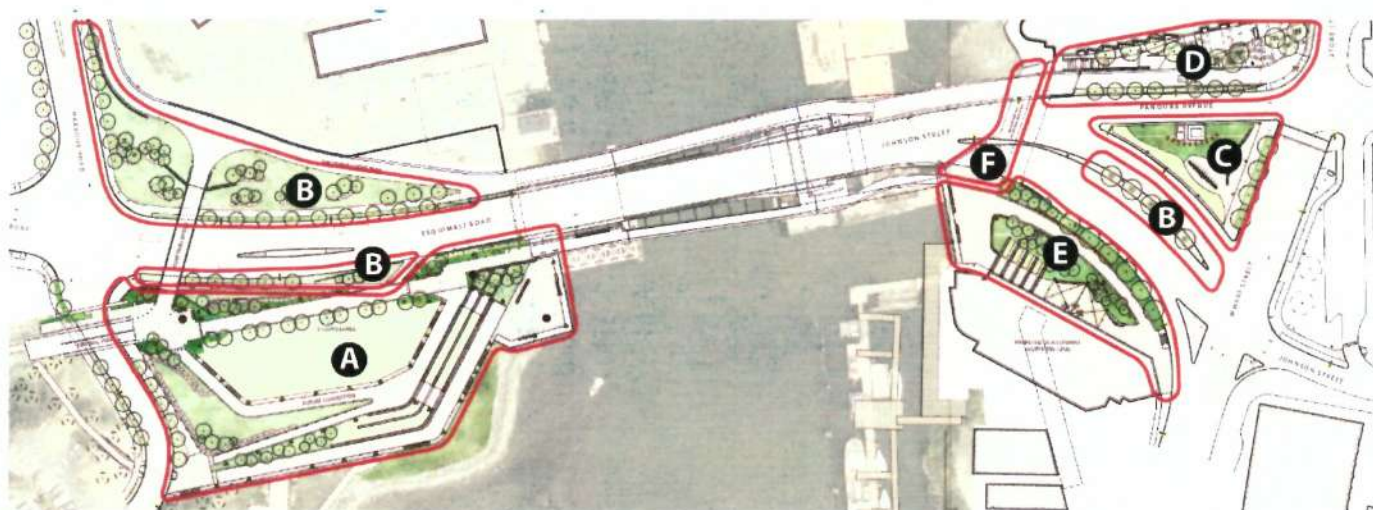
The project team has organized the work around the six areas that are planned to enhance the experience for residents and visitors, in this part of the City. The work ranges from new boulevards and pedestrian and cycling pathways, to welcoming plazas and park space, all within walking distance of the downtown core. The largest of these areas, in the location previously

identified as “former s-curve lands” on project documents, presents as a generous expansion to Songhees Park, in the Vic West neighbourhood.

In December 2017, staff presented a report to Council that included conceptual design drawings and a funding strategy, resulting in the following decisions:

- Council accepted the revised concept designs for the “triangle island” space and Northern Junk Plaza
- A budget of \$650,000 for the work associated with the new boulevards and Triangle Island
- Direction for staff to report back amending the Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw by merging parks acquisition and park development charges.
- A budget of \$3,000,000 for the construction of the future Victoria West park (“former s-curve lands”)
- Direction for staff to present the proposed plans to the Accessibility Working Group (AWG) for information and input
- Direction for staff to work with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to incorporate local Indigenous elements into the story wall and identify other opportunities to recognize the history of the Lekwungen Peoples on these lands.

Following this direction from Council, staff disseminated the work into six projects, as noted in the site plan below:



A) Songhees Park Expansion
B) Boulevard Landscaping
C) Triangle Island

D) Janion Plaza
E) Northern Junk Plaza
F) DFHP Pedestrian Underpass

The first half of 2018 was a very active period, consisting of completion of construction of the Johnson Street Bridge, as well as the initiation of design and procurement activities for various public realm projects.

As approved by Council, the amendment to the City's Development Cost Charges bylaw, to merge park acquisition and development charges, was completed in September 2018.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The project components are currently in various phases of progress or completion. Continuing to move efficiently is a focus for the project team in order to mitigate against key risks including cost escalation, competitive market conditions, and maintaining access to transportation connections. An overview of the project status is provided in the table below, including an update on each component.

Project	Status	Comments
Songhees Park Expansion	Some Challenges	Delay in design development due to resourcing challenges and other organizational priorities, budget risk due to market escalation. Schedule updated.
Triangle Island	Some Challenges	Delay in design development due to complexities relating to public art; to be resolved in June.
Boulevard landscaping	Complete	
Janion Plaza	Complete	
DFHP Pedestrian Underpass	Complete	
Northern Junk Plaza	Inactive	Awaiting new proposal from developer.

Songhees Park Expansion

Overview

The Songhees Park Expansion is a major initiative to construct a new park space that integrates with the existing Songhees Park and the Johnson Street Bridge, in an area formerly known as the 's-curve lands'. In December 2017, Council approved a concept plan for the park following two phases of public engagement.

Last year, the new plaza next to the bridge was completed and opened for public use, providing scenic views of the harbour. Staff have recently completed a furnishing plan for this space and the new seating elements will be installed over the coming month.

The project team is currently in the process of selecting a consultant partner, to complete the detailed design and construction drawings for this park.

Public Engagement

The project team has recently engaged with representatives of the Accessibility Working Group, the Victoria West Community Association, and the Songhees First Nation to solicit input on the park plan. Staff have also reached out to the Esquimalt First Nation and look forward to hearing their perspective.

In April, staff met with the Accessibility Working Group (AWG) and presented material relating to the concept design for feedback. Staff received input regarding wayfinding, low-allergen plantings, stinging insects, and site furnishings. A request from the AWG for low-allergen plants appears to

be a viable option and horticulture and arboriculture teams are currently assessing a potential planting list, which will be shared with the AWG for awareness.

An engagement session with the Victoria West Community Association (VWCA) was also held in April. The dialogue was collaborative, and staff recorded input including concerns about the amount of hardscape and potential lack of shade, as well as a desire for play features in the park. Staff confirmed that while the conceptual design had been approved by Council, there were some opportunities to mitigate or manage the concerns identified in the detailed design process. Staff have committed to a follow-up meeting with representatives of the VWCA once the design consultant is onboarded.

In May, staff met with senior representatives from the Songhees First Nation to learn about the cultural significance of this site as the traditional home of the Songhees people. The discussion covered topics such as, the site history, recent changes in the area, current programs being developed in the region, as well as the potential for new educational opportunities about the Lekwungen territory in the park. Follow-up meetings have been scheduled with the Songhees representatives to explore these opportunities in more detail.

Risk Management

The risk management plan is an important component of this project. A summary of the key risks, impacts and responses is included below.

Key Risks	Description	Response
Contaminated Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contaminated soils are presently encapsulated below a large portion of the future park area- Provincial regulatory requirements include permits, safe work procedures, and safe disposal of contaminated soils during the construction of the park redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Staff have retained an environmental consultant to assess geotechnical conditions, design details, and the development of site safety and remediation requirements- Mitigation strategies, and design solutions will continue to be refined through the detailed design process
Archaeological Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Archaeological monitoring of ground disturbing activities is required due to evidence of early cultural activity in this location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Staff are working with consultants to develop an archaeological monitoring program to manage this risk- Mitigation strategies, and design solutions will be developed through the detailed design process
Market Conditions, Competition, and Cost Escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Since 2016 the local market has experienced a major increase in construction activity, with numerous large projects,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Staff are taking a proactive value management approach, which implements value engineering best practices throughout design and construction process

	<p>resulting in labour shortage, and cost pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual cost escalation of ~10%, confirmed through recent tender activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff are working with quantity surveyors to complete detailed cost estimates at key project milestones
Shoreline Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction on or near the high tide mark may trigger federal permit requirements, not currently within the project scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The concept design Council endorsed in 2017 does not include work below the high tide mark. Changes in project scope directly adjacent to the shoreline would require additional resources and would have an impact the project schedule. - Special consideration regarding construction methodology to minimize impact to the shoreline

Next Steps

Detailed design work is expected to be finished in Q4 2019. Following procurement of a contractor, construction is anticipated to start in mid-2020.

Triangle Island

Overview

In 2017, Council approved the commissioning of Public Art for Triangle Island to the City of Victoria's Artist in Residence Luke Ramsey and Indigenous Artist in Residence Lindsay Delaronde, with a project budget of up to \$250,000. At the end of that year, Council received and approved The Orca Public Art design. The art component is a major aspect of the new triangular public space, and further investigation by staff into the art construction and delivery has resulted in a need for additional dialogue with Council. A separate report has been prepared detailing the new information and potential options associated with the public art, for Council consideration.

In addition to the funding available for the public art, \$291,000 is available for public realm improvements associated with the construction of the civil and landscape elements of this public space. As the artwork and all other aspects of the space are intrinsically linked, progress on the detailed design has been paused until the direction for the art project has been confirmed.

Risk Management

A summary of the key risks, impacts and responses, for this project is included below.

Key Risks	Risk Description	Risk Response
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The landscaping, civil engineering and artwork are intrinsically linked, and progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of new information and options

	on the design must consider all aspects	relating to the art for Council consideration and direction
Schedule	- To complete the remaining hard and soft landscaping, direction on the public art is required	

Next Steps

Staff will proceed in accordance with direction received from Council following consideration of the report being presented, Johnson Street Bridge and Bastion Square - Public Art.

David Foster Harbour Pathway Underpass

Council approved the construction of the underpass portion of the pathway in 2018. The underpass provides a pedestrian connection between the Northern Junk Public Plaza and the Janion Building public plaza.

The pathway consists of a suspended steel bridge structure with concrete slab and integrated lighting. The pathway is wheelchair accessible and designed to provide a welcoming pedestrian experience along the waterfront. Future consideration may be given to programming for the area as well as a public art in coordination with the development of the Northern Junk Plaza. The pathway will connect through the Janion Building deck and to the newest segment planned development at the Pearl Building, located at 1628 Store Street.

Northern Junk Plaza

Interim improvements to the pedestrian walkway and hydro-seeding were installed by PCL in 2018 and currently provide access to the Johnson Street Bridge pedestrian walkway. Final construction of this plaza will be dependent on approved development plans for the adjacent Northern Junk property. As a result, design development of the Northern Junk Plaza is currently on hold pending receipt of a proposal through the development permit application process.

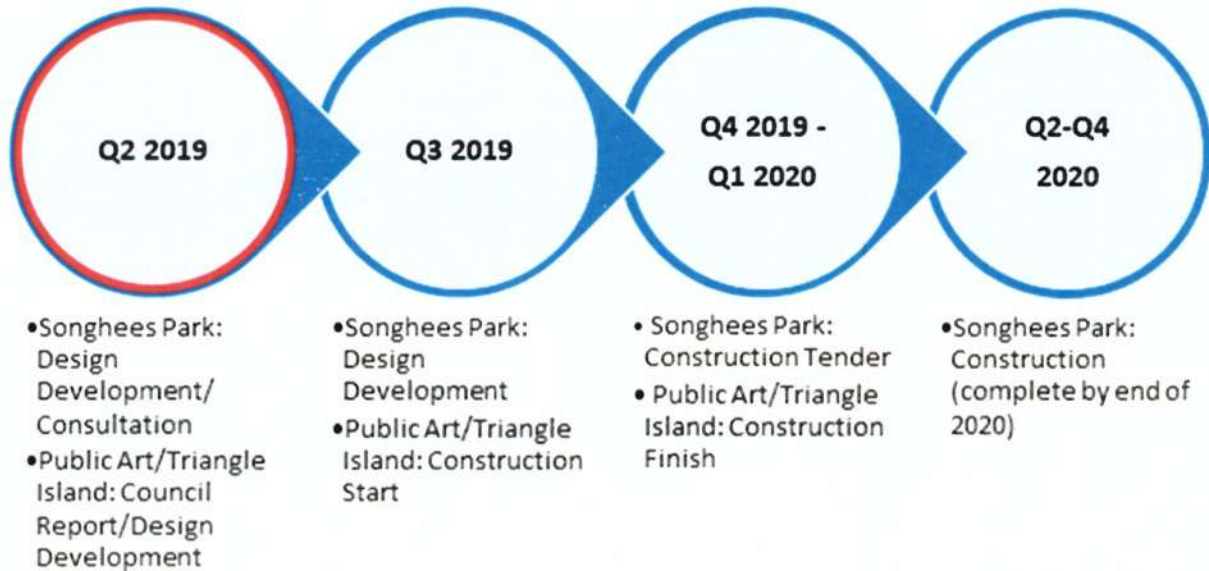
Budget

The project investments to-date associated with activities related to design, engineering, construction, and engagement activities are noted below.

	Project Component	Budget	Actuals & Commitments	Budget Remaining
1	Songhees Park expansion	\$3,000,000	\$23,500	\$2,976,500
2	Boulevard landscaping, Triangle Island, and Janion plaza	\$651,700	\$330,614	\$321,086
3	DFHP pedestrian underpass	\$614,000	\$586,286	\$27,714
4	Public art	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000
6	Total	\$4,515,700	\$901,411	\$3,614,289

Schedule

The schedule below outlines the key milestones relating to Songhees Park and Triangle Island, including the public art installation, to be reviewed with Council in June.



2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan

The Waterfront Public Realm Initiative is consistent with achieving outcomes for the following objectives in the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Objective #5: Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City
- Strategic Objective #6: Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship
- Strategic Objective #7: Sustainable Transportation
- Strategic Objective #8: Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The Waterfront Public Realm Initiative is consistent with the Official Community Plan, specifically policies and actions identified under the following goals:

- 7(B): Victorians move freely and efficiently via a safe, integrated and convenient network of public transit, bike routes, and a supportive, inviting pedestrian realm in preference to driving alone.
- 8(A): Victoria is vibrant and attractive with high quality architecture and urban design that enhance its unique character and sense of place.
- 9(A): Victoria is an active community where everyone enjoys convenient access to community parks, open spaces, facilities, amenities and programs close to where they live.

Impacts to Financial Plan

All the projects have been approved for funding within the current Financial Plan. The funding considerations relating to the public art are noted within a separate report, as referenced above.

Accessibility Impact Statement

Accessibility and connectivity are primary requirements informing the initiatives and will continue to be of focus throughout the detailed design of the remaining projects. As noted above, specific attention is being given to the treatments, including hardscape and plants for the new park space in Vic West, to reduce potential barriers to access and enjoyment of this public space.

CONCLUSIONS

The project team is pleased to have made measurable progress in accordance with the project schedule and budget, resulting in the design, construction, and completion of several components. These new amenities are eagerly anticipated by the community and will add to the vibrancy of the waterfront area for citizens of all ages and abilities.

Respectfully submitted,




Derrick Newman
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Facilities Management



Thomas Soulliere
Director
Parks, Recreation and Facilities

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: June 21, 2019