

CITY OF NANAIMO

BUSINESS CASE – Parks Operations: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas, Lead Supervisor

CURRENT OVERVIEW

The Parks Operations Section is a hugely diverse work area responsible for the conservation, development, and maintenance of parkland within the City. Through land acquisition (a key accomplishment of the 2005 PRC Masterplan) the amount of parkland in the City has almost doubled since 2005 from 589 hectares to approximately 1,160 hectares. Today, more than 10% of all land within the City boundary is designated as a park, including over 840 hectares of Natural Area Parkland, 30% of which is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area. The City also maintains more than 180 kilometres of trail which has increased by over 50% since the trail inventory in 2005 of 118km.

The increase of the City's parkland and trails is mirrored in the addition of associated amenities from simple surface assets such as benches and waste receptacles, to larger assets including forests, playgrounds, and sportsfields. In addition, diverse land use and recreation opportunities within parks requires a wide-range of responsibility including: trails, natural area parkland, Nanaimo's urban forest, destination parks, neighbourhood parks and playgrounds, sports courts, parkettes, squares and plazas, downtown horticultural displays, facility grounds, medians, boulevards and their associated amenities. .

To manage this portfolio maintenance is categorized into five key areas; Fields and Playgrounds, Trails, Horticulture, Urban Forestry and Utilities. Each of these units is headed by a Supervisor or Coordinator. These five positions, along with the Parks Project Coordinator and the Parks Clerk, directly report to the Manager, Parks Operations

BUSINESS ISSUE

There is a lack of high-level supervisory capacity within the Parks Operations section which has a number of impacts. At the supervisory level, there is not adequate capacity or the level of support necessary to facilitate the required change, growth, and resilience-building within the Parks section. At the manager level, the Manager, Parks Operations is unable to proactively and strategically manage the Parks Operations section due to the number, and diversity, of directly reporting staff. This is exacerbated by the lack of supervisory capacity. Key items such as asset management planning (including natural assets), implementation of operational improvement programs, and annual planning and budgetary management, are pushed aside to handle day to day, supervisory level items as they arise. In addition, requests and enquiries from residents requiring the attention of the Manager cannot be dealt with in an expeditious manner.

These issues leave the Parks Operations Section unable to:

- Meet the high expectations of the community – Parks use is constantly evolving and there is a large demand for a high number of varied and well managed outdoor recreational spaces and opportunities, in particular, those that protect our natural areas.
- Shift from a reactive to proactive maintenance model – The current break-fix maintenance model means that many of Park's assets are maintained only once a maintenance issue has presented

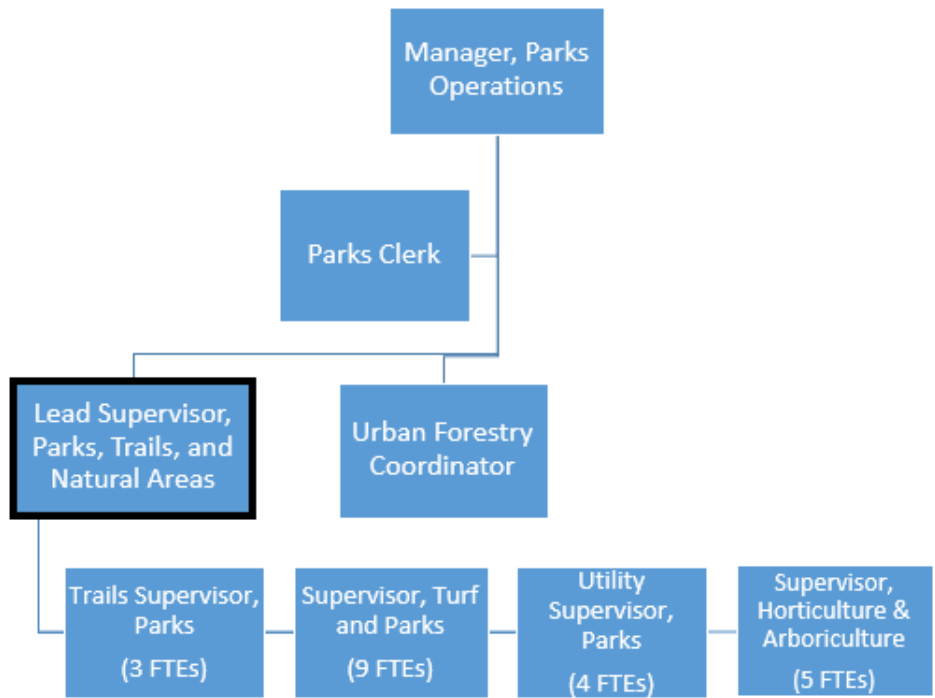
its self. This puts parks assets at greater risk of failure and results in assets vulnerable to deterioration.

- Pivot and take advantage of opportunities as they arise – There have been opportunities recognized in Phase 1 of Reimagine Nanaimo including improved maintenance and protection of parks and Natural Areas, playgrounds, and improved accessibility to support equitable use by people of all ages and abilities

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The Parks, Trails and Natural Areas, Lead Supervisor will shift operational oversight and support to the Parks Operations units from the Manager, Parks Operations. This will better serve the community through enhanced capacity to proactively supervise and manage Parks, Trails and Natural Areas and allow the Manager, Parks Operations to focus on higher level strategic management of Parks Operations.

Purposed New Org Chart:



OPTIONS

Option #1 – Add one Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas, Lead Supervisor to Park Operations section

Creation of one permanent full-time Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas, Lead Supervisor position reporting Manager, Parks Operations.

Benefits:

- Increased capacity to proactively manage parks assets in a planned and strategic fashion at the supervisory and manager level.
- Residents will experience better preserved and maintained parks, trails and Natural Areas.

- Greater ability to explore opportunities and emerging trends as they arise.
- Improved management of parks assets by increasing maintenance planning and operational improvement programs.
- Improved responsiveness to requests from the public.
- Ability to rectify issues, and reach goals and opportunities, as highlighted in phase 1 of Reimagine Nanaimo.

Weaknesses:

- Permanent increase to operating budget of Parks Operations

Financial Analysis:

- The position is anticipated to be a level 14, subject to JEC, with an annual salary of \$100,400 plus benefits. 2022 budget impact including benefits is estimated at \$110,400 based on a February 15th start, 2023 budget impact is estimated at \$128,600.
- Additional annual costs are estimated at \$13,100 in 2022 and \$13,700 in 2023 for fleet unit, training, computer network charges, and a cell phone.
- One-time costs upon the creation of the position are projected at \$81,400 for the purchase and equipping of an electric fleet unit, electric vehicle charging station, computer, workstation and smart phone.

Option# 2 – Status Quo

Continue with no permanent full-time Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas, Lead Supervisor in the Parks Operations Section.

Benefits:

- No increase to operating budget for Parks Operations

Weaknesses:

- Inability to meet the high expectations of parks users in terms of well managed and environmentally focused outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Inability to more actively preserve and restore our natural areas.
- Continuation of break-fix maintenance model.
- Inability to proactively rectify issues, and reach goals and opportunities, as highlighted in phase 1 of Reimagine Nanaimo.

RECOMMENDATION

Option #1 – Add one Parks, Trails and Natural Areas, Lead Supervisor to Park Operations Section.