



## COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	2 April 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	NE Regional Park – Master Plan
<b>Boards Routed Through:</b>	N/A
<b>Date:</b>	N/A

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### **Issue:**

Council is being presented with the master plan and implementation strategy for the NE Regional Park and is being asked to endorse the master plan.

### **Background:**

In September 2023, the City and Arcadis Professional Services (Arcadis) began work on the master plan for the NE Regional Park. The master plan process involved site analysis including the assessment of servicing, transportation impacts, thorough public engagement and environmental, biophysical and land use impacts.

The master plan builds on previously completed work which includes the community recreation needs assessment, service gap analysis and Council's chosen theme of **Organized Sport and Civic/Events/Arts**. The master plan will fill recreational gaps as identified in the service gap analysis such as: additional baseball diamonds, a disc golf course, festival/event/civic spaces to include a stage, amphitheater, shelters and outdoor art, natural areas/spaces to include educational/interpretive features, passive/social areas for picnics and playgrounds, pathways and trails including natural, developed and cross-country ski trails, additional rectangular fields and other active recreation including community gardens, court pads, ice rink, skate park, splash/spray park and tennis/pickleball courts.

A key component of the master plan involved public engagement that took place from October to December 2023, it provided internal and external stakeholders the opportunity to provide their feedback on an initial concept plan. Public engagement provided additional insight on the need for multi-purpose amenities within the park.

On February 5, Administration presented Council with the *What We Heard Report* from public engagement. Throughout the process, Arcadis continued to revise and refine the concept plan.

## Amenity Composition

Using the thematic concept and service gap analysis as a guide, the amenity composition is outlined in the phasing concept below and in the presentation for Council. The natural areas of the park were met with positivity across the board from stakeholders as a high priority benefit that is currently absent in the community. Stakeholders had noted the importance for multi-purpose recreational fields to include sports increasing in popularity such as cricket, rugby, and lacrosse as well as the need for additional pickleball and tennis courts, baseball diamonds and a disc golf course. The arts and culture/event space meets the gap of providing an additional location for larger events in the community and will include a stage and amphitheater seating, as a scale of comparison this area is comparable to the size of Prince's Island Park in Calgary.

The gap analysis proposed a campground in the NE portion of the park; however, administration and Arcadis have explored the option to designate this area as a "Special Study Area" with opportunities such as relocating the BMX track as a leaseholder (subject to future discussions) and incorporating other passive amenities such as a community garden or future location for a memorial tree grove. The alternative option would be to designate this area for full passive amenities including a contained off-leash dog park. These opportunities will be presented to Council at the time of detailed design for Phase 5.

## Phasing Plan

The master plan proposes phasing for the park's development over a timeline of 10+ years, beginning with the west side of the park and moving east with each phase. However, funding is not yet allocated for Phases 2 to 7 in the 10-Year Capital Plan. Council may choose to modify the order of phases and/or timeline through the Capital Budget process.

**Phase 1** – Consists of approximately 22 acres of the park and includes a paved pathway loop, skating loop, community garden, gravel parking, temporary parks operations and washrooms, benches, picnic areas, kiosk and an entry plaza with the opportunity to display public art.

**Phase 2** – Includes additional parking, inclusive playground, seating and picnic areas, Indigenous ceremony/powwow/games area including vegetable garden, learning meadows with interpretive signage, extension of pathways throughout the park including paved regional bike path and gravel trails, seating area and viewpoint and kiosk/signage point of interest for the bomber crash site.

**Phase 3** – Includes Arts/Culture/Event space with stage and amphitheater seating, additional parking on the west side, storm pond/wetland with a seating area and viewpoint, natural and inclusive play/picnic area, disc golf course, warming hut, firepit and washrooms and the addition of parking on the east side.

**Phase 4** – Includes additional parking on the east side, food truck and picnic area, four baseball diamonds, the hub (picnic shelter, kiosk, washrooms, splash park and playground), two multi-purpose recreation fields, ice rink/winter activity area, trailhead and staging on the east side, history of the land kiosk and parks operation depot.

**Phase 5** – Includes additional pathways to the west entrance, sensory play/alternate location for the community garden, two multi-purpose recreation fields, additional parking on the east side and special study area to be determined.

**Phase 6** – Includes two multi-purpose recreation fields, basketball/multi-use games courts, flex/practice areas, tennis and pickleball courts and a natural and inclusive play area.

**Phase 7** – Includes two multi-purpose recreation fields, community garden on the east side and a potential location for memorial tree grove.

## **2024 Work Plan**

Upon endorsement of the master plan, detailed design and construction tendering will commence with R.F. Binnie & Associates for the 2024 season. Construction of Phase 1 is scheduled to begin in Q2 2024 with an estimated completion of Q4 2024. The remaining regional park land will continue to be leased for ranch and farm activities until the next phases are developed and will not be open to the public.

### **Phase 1 Risks**

Administration notes that there are some risks associated with implementation of Phase 1 in 2024. The tender package will be issued at the height of the season, which may impact interest in bidding and/or quote prices. Time may be required to obtain certain materials anticipated to be installed in this phase and permit approvals may be required for some items. These risks are mitigated by proceeding with tendering as soon as possible on the basis of an approved Master Plan.

### **Alignment with South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and AirdrieONE:**

AirdrieONE: Natural areas and features are valued, preserved, and sensitively integrated into the City's open space systems.

### **Boards Routed Through:**

N/A

### **Administration Recommendation:**

Administration recommends that Council:

1. endorses the NE Regional Park Master Plan, in principle;
2. directs Administration to proceed with detailed design and construction for Phase 1 in 2024; and
3. directs Administration to present phase development costs for consideration in the 2025 capital budget deliberations.

Proceeding with the recommendation will provide certainty on the general concept for this community asset and it will allow for immediate tendering of construction drawings for quotes for Phase 1 only. Council will have the opportunity to evaluate phase development costs as part of future budget deliberations.

### **Alternatives/Implications:**

Alternative 1: Council could choose to endorse Phase 1 of the NE Regional Park Master Plan only.

Implications: Accepting this alternative indicates that Council has portions of the Master Plan that require revision to meet their vision for this community asset. However, it

also means that Council is sufficiently satisfied with the scope and amenities of Phase 1 as to allow them to be tendered and constructed in 2024.

Alternative 2: Council could choose to endorse the NE Regional Park Master Plan but defer construction of Phase 1.

Implications: This alternative provides certainty of design and composition of this public asset and would allow tendering documents to be prepared for the amenities in Phase 1. However, construction of that phase would be deferred by at least a year, or at the direction of Council. Budget for Phase 1 improvements would be held in abeyance at the risk of general cost escalations to make these capital improvements. Public access to the park would be delayed at least one year.

Alternative 3: Council could choose to direct Administration to make amendments to the NE Regional Park Master Plan and return with a revised version.

Implications: The ultimate design of NE Regional Park would remain in doubt, and public access to the park would be delayed until the master plan is finalized and construction occurs.

### **Communications Plan:**

Administration will prepare website updates and a social media announcement campaign in conjunction with the opening of the park to the public.

### **Recommendation:**

That Council:

1. endorses the NE Regional Park Master Plan, in principle;
2. directs Administration to proceed with detailed design and construction for Phase 1 in 2024; and
3. directs Administration to present phase development costs for consideration in the 2025 capital budget deliberations.

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Justine Berger  
Jr. Corporate Land Administrator

Presenter:	Justine Berger
Department:	Corporate Properties
Reviewed by:	Stephen Utz
Attachments:	#1: NE Regional Park Master Plan Summary #2: NE Regional Master Plan #3: NE Regional Proposed Phasing Plan #4: NE Regional Phase 1 Diagram
Appointment:	Ernie Webster, Arcadis Professional Services