



STAFF REPORT TO COMMITTEE

DATE OF REPORT May 1, 2023
MEETING TYPE & DATE Electoral Area Services Committee Meeting of June 7, 2023
FROM: Parks & Trails Division
Operations Department
SUBJECT: Shawnigan Lake Waterfront Parks Schematic Design Brief and Boat Launch Feasibility Study
FILE: 6100-20

PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present, for adoption, the Shawnigan Lake Schematic Design for Waterfront Parks – Landscape and Architectural Design Brief report, and the Boat Launch Feasibility Study, Shawnigan Lake report, for information.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

That it be recommended to the Board:

1. That the Shawnigan Lake Schematic Design for Waterfront Parks – Landscape and Architectural Design Brief, be adopted; and
2. That the Boat Launch Feasibility Study, Shawnigan Lake, be received for information.

BACKGROUND

Consultants have completed two study reports in relation to Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake waterfront parks:

1. Shawnigan Lake Schematic Design for Waterfront Parks – Landscape and Architectural Design Brief (**Waterfront Parks Design Brief**), by Urban Systems (2021) (Attachment A)
2. Boat Launch Feasibility Study, Shawnigan Lake (**Boat Launch Feasibility Study**), by McElhanney Ltd. (2022) (Attachment B)

Both efforts were commissioned by the CVRD to evolve some priority conceptual ideas for Shawnigan Village area waterfront parks and trails, as most recently advanced through the 2019 *Think Shawnigan* public engagement process and reports:

- [Think Shawnigan Design Brief](#)
- [The Shawnigan Lake Village Plan 2020](#)
- [Shawnigan Lake Village Design Guide 2020](#)

These ideas build on concepts and priority recommendations in earlier Board-adopted plans, including the [Shawnigan Lake Parks and Trails Master Plan \(2010\)](#), and [The Elsie Miles Park Concept Plan \(2017\)](#).

The priority waterfront parks and trails concepts identified for further study in the Waterfront Parks Design Brief include:

- lakeview portals and trail amenities (along the Shawnigan Rail with Trail);
- public washroom siting and design; and
- concept plan for Shawnigan Wharf Park, to include the possible relocation of the existing vehicle boat launch.

The Electoral Area B Community Parks Advisory Commission provided input on the Waterfront Parks Design Brief at their October 14, 2021 and December 9, 2021 meetings.

The Boat Launch Feasibility Study was separately commissioned to study the feasibility of replacing existing Shawnigan Lake vehicular access boat launch locations (i.e. Shawnigan Wharf Park and Recreation Road) with a purpose-built facility at an alternative CVRD-managed park on the lake.

ANALYSIS

1. Waterfront Parks Design Brief

The Waterfront Parks Design Brief provides conceptual designs and Class C cost estimates for two Shawnigan Rail with Trail rest/viewing areas (Village Bluff Rest Area: adjacent to Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road; and Rail Trail Gateway Rest Area: adjacent to the new parking area at Dougan Park), Masons Beach Park and Shawnigan Wharf Park.

Key features in the design concepts are listed below:

Village Bluff Rest Area

- seating area with a bench
- select tree limbing/thinning to allow lake views

Rail Trail Gateway Rest Area

- a potential future washroom
- seating area with benches
- look-out point
- tree thinning to allow views
- pathway connections between the parking lot and Rail with Trail

Masons Beach Park

- a park plaza at street level along Renfrew Road, with seating and beach access
- expansion of picnic and seating area
- accessible ramp to beach
- improved trail connections to the Rail with Trail

Shawnigan Wharf Park

- existing boat launch for non-motorized and emergency vessels only (existing vehicular access boat launch relocated elsewhere)
- floating multi-purpose hall, boat house and wharf
- public washroom
- minor beach extension south
- seating areas, including a gazebo covered area
- expanded and reconfigured parking area (34 spots) with swale, split-rail fencing, relocated signage and closure of the Heald Road vehicular access
- canoe/kayak racks

Next Steps

If adopted, the conceptual designs and cost estimates of the Waterfront Parks Design Brief will be used to inform budget considerations in 2024 and beyond, and in support of potential, future grant applications.

2. Boat Launch Feasibility Study

The CVRD currently maintains two public concrete ramp boat launches on Shawnigan Lake: one adjacent to Shawnigan Wharf Park; and one near the end of Recreation Road, both on the east side of the lake. Both are within Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) road right-of-way's (ROW), and operated by the CVRD under permits. Neither location offers sufficient and appropriately designed parking or vehicle/trailer staging areas for launching/retrieval or turnaround. Use issues at these locations include increasing demand, congestion and conflicts between park users and boaters. For the boat launch at Shawnigan Wharf Park, the close proximity to the Island Corridor rail-line is also noted as an issue.

The Boat Launch Feasibility Study provides preliminary conceptual designs to assess the feasibility of alternatively integrating a boat launch facility at one of two existing waterfront parks: Old Mill Park (owned/operated by the CVRD); or West Shawnigan Lake Park (owned by BC Parks, operated by CVRD under a Park Use Permit).

The boat launch design criteria includes:

- parking lot capacity for 20-30 boat trailer vehicles, and 6-10 standard vehicles;
- suitable land, foreshore and lake profile topography;
- parallel double concrete ramp with central dock, to accommodate multiple simultaneous users;
- separation between the boat launch area and swimming/park use areas;
- allowance for the potential of a future toll or fee structure for specific boat launch use; and
- preliminary consideration of minimized environmental, park use and other impacts.

Old Mill Park – Site Assessment

Key elements of the concept and assessment of a boat launch facility at Old Mill Park include:

- a one-way elliptical design, expanded from the existing parking area. Other new parking area(s) would be required for other park visitors;
- substantial tree/vegetation removals and loss of park trails;
- stream protection areas could be impacted, and limit a feasible boat launch footprint;
- separation of day use areas from a boat launch area is not feasible;
- favourable location is on the east side of lake, near existing launches and with ease of access from Highway 1 and nearby communities; and
- generally suitable topography.

Given the extent of environmental and existing park use impacts that would be involved, as well as a limited feasible boat launch footprint, the consultants recommended no further study of Old Mill Park as a potential boat launch site.

West Shawnigan Lake Park – Site Assessment

Two options for a boat launch facility at West Shawnigan Lake Park were explored:

Concept A:

- centered on an undeveloped road right-of-way in the centre of the park, at the southern edge of existing lawn areas;

- approximately 0.6 ha footprint;
- an elliptical boat launch area and vehicular circulation would be separated from the day use park areas;
- capacity for 22 boat trailer vehicles, and 8 standard vehicle parking stalls;
- smaller footprint than Concept B, but would require more tree removals; and
- significant but feasible earthworks would be required.

Concept B:

- linear one-way design that bisects the park, with an entrance to the south and an exit onto Armstrong Road to the north;
- approximately 0.7 ha footprint;
- situated to utilize existing lawn areas where less tree removals would be required;
- capacity for 20 boat trailer vehicles, and 6 standard vehicle parking stalls;
- would require boat launch users to reload boats by exiting the site and returning through the launch entrance on W. Shawnigan Lake Rd.; and
- higher impacts on the day-use areas and park visitor experience than Concept A.

The consultants ranked Concept A as preferable, and provided a Class C cost estimate of the Concept A boat launch and parking configuration, estimated at \$1,393,000.

Next Steps

The existing two public boat launches on the east side of Shawnigan Lake managed by the CVRD are identified as not addressing current or projected future boater access needs, and will continue to create challenges for boaters, other park users and the local community, particularly during the busy summer months. While the Province has confirmed that both MOTI and BC Parks have jurisdictional responsibilities for the central, unnamed ROW within West Shawnigan Lake Park, the Province has also identified that Malahat Nation has an interest in exploring shared management opportunities with West Shawnigan Lake Park. The Province has committed to negotiation on a park Collaborative Management Agreement in the [Te'mexw Treaty Association Agreement-in-Principle \(AiP\)](#) (2015).

Further exploration of a vehicular boat launch facility at West Shawnigan Lake Park would require budget allocation to retain qualified professionals to engage with jurisdictional parties to determine potential approval processes, as well as lead public engagement and further design and assessment processes (such as geotechnical, environmental and archaeological assessments). The CVRD could also consider proceeding with additional studies to determine other potential locations around Shawnigan Lake that could accommodate a new public boat launch, inclusive of sufficient uplands for vehicle/trailer parking, with the understanding that other locations on the lake would likely involve the process of securing private waterfront land interest(s), which are limited on Shawnigan Lake.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The conceptual designs and cost estimates of the Waterfront Parks Design Brief would be used to inform future budget considerations for Electoral Area B Shawnigan Lake Community Parks Function 232.

Further exploration of a boat launch at West Shawnigan Lake Park would require budgeting consideration, and funding to engage consultants to lead next steps.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

The Waterfront Parks Design Brief would be posted to the Parks & Trails webpage of the CVRD website upon adoption of the plan by the Board, highlighting the expanded opportunities for the waterfront village parks in Shawnigan Lake.

STRATEGIC/BUSINESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

The Waterfront Parks Design Brief advances community place-making initiatives, as per Action 1.2 in the 2020-2022 CVRD Strategic Plan, and provides shovel-worthy proposals that could support grant applications, as per Action 5.1.

GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

☐ Not Applicable

Referred to (upon completion):

- ☐ Community Services (*Arts & Culture, Cowichan Community Centre, Cowichan Lake Recreation, South Cowichan Recreation, Facilities & Transit*)
- ☐ Corporate Services (*Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legislative Services*)
- ☐ Operations (*Parks & Trails, Recycling & Waste Management, Utilities*)
- ☐ Land Use Services (*Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement, Community Planning, Development Services, Strategic Initiatives*)
- ☐ Strategic Services (*Communications & Engagement, Economic Development, Emergency Management, Environmental Services*)

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:



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Clayton Postings
A/General Manager

Reviewed for form and content and approved for submission to the Committee:

Resolution:

Financial Considerations:

☒ Corporate Officer

☒ Chief Financial Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Shawnigan Lake Schematic Design for Waterfront Parks – Landscape and Architectural Design Brief

Attachment B – Boat Launch Feasibility Study, Shawnigan Lake