

Introduction

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1 Introduction

1.1 Plan Purpose

The purpose of this project is to produce a Master Plan to guide the long-term strategic approach for the use, enhancement and management of Mill Lake Park through the next 20 years.

The Mill Lake Park Master Plan provides a practical community-based vision and guiding principles, illustrative conceptual plans for future improvements, and a phased construction strategy to guide the direction and prioritization of park projects and programming.

1.1.1 What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan builds on existing City plans, policies and initiatives while identifying public needs and priorities for the Park. The Plan also provides direction for environmental protection and recommends civic, cultural and recreational uses that are appropriate to the area.

In summary, a Park Master Plan:

- is a strategic planning document that reflects City policy;
- is a framework for future planning and decision-making regarding environmental protection, suitable recreation activities, park facilities such as trails and other open space infrastructure;
- articulates a vision for the Park and highlights priorities and long-term aspirations;
- includes an analysis of existing Park conditions and design options based on site characteristics and the recreation needs of the community;

- describes the investigation and design options;
- includes a preferred plan based on stakeholder and public input; and
- sets out a clear implementation plan to facilitate funding for improvements and ongoing Park management in alignment with other City projects and operations.

1.1.2 The Need for a Master Plan

With a quickly growing community, an overall Master Plan for Mill Lake Park is a significant, and necessary, step in upgrading and maintaining the quality of outdoor offerings in the Park. Building on existing assets the Park is to be a central gathering hub that both preserves natural spaces and provides for an array of recreational opportunities.

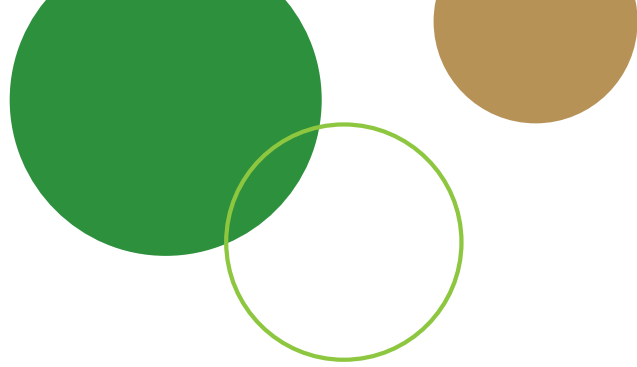
A comprehensive long-term Master Plan provides a framework for the Park's ongoing development, use and management, within the context of the location, natural assets, and community's vision.

A draft Master Plan for Mill Lake Park was last prepared in 2013. Some recommendations from the draft plan were undertaken. The City's 2016 Official Community Plan (OCP), subsequent and related Master Plans, as well as changes to adjoining development and recent land acquisition, have resulted in the need for a new Master Plan for the Mill Lake Park.

MILL LAKE
PARK

City of Abbotsford
Mill Lake Park Master Plan
2025





1.2 Plan Overview

With a quickly growing City, the overall Master Plan for Mill Lake Park is a significant and necessary step in planning, upgrading and maintaining the quality of offerings in the Park. Building on existing assets and reflecting current City strategies, the Park is to be a central gathering hub that both preserves natural spaces and provides for an array of suitable recreation opportunities.

A long-term vision and associated guiding principles specific to the Park has been prepared based on stakeholder and public input as part of the master planning process. The Plan provides a framework for the Park's ongoing enhancement, use and management, within the context of the location, natural assets, and community's vision.

The master planning for Mill Lake Park considers the existing inventory and uses of the study area, the priorities identified by the public, applicable standards and regulations, and strategic goals of the City.

1.2.1 Project Goals & Outcomes

The Mill Lake Park Master Plan will be a long-term plan for the Park based on an understanding of the Park's heritage; assessment of the state of current Park programs; infrastructure and amenities; development of a vision and conceptual plan; accompanying principles to guide construction of future amenities; and an implementation strategy to move from the present state to the vision in a structured way.

The goals of the master plan project were to:

- Review previous master plans and studies related to the Park
- Consider the history of the Park and its future role
- Ensure alignment with current City plans and policies applicable to the Park and its context
- Broadly assess the existing conditions and character of the Park
- Assess the existing recreational uses of the Park and identify suitable additional recreational uses
- Consider the environmental and aesthetic assets of the Park and confirm protection of these assets
- Investigate design options and a preferred option for the enhancement of the Park
- Ensure community and stakeholder engagement in the Master Plan formulation

The outcome of the Master Plan is to:

- a. Ensure that Mill Lake Park remains a celebrated and cherished public space;
- b. Provide quality park space for current and future generations;
- c. Offer an enhanced public realm to host events;
- d. Optimize all-season use of the Park;
- e. Ensure integration of land use and programs in a manner that meets Citywide, partner and community needs; and
- f. Provide a road map for the management, operation and enhancement of the Park.



1.2.2 Project Process

The Master Plan will be delivered in five stages as outlined below.

- Stage 1 – Key Findings Report (complete)
- Stage 2 – Exploring Options (complete)
- Stage 3 – Draft Master Plan (complete)
- Stage 4 – Final Master Plan
- Stage 5 – Implementation of Master Plan

Stage 1

The primary deliverable from Stage 1 was a Key Findings Report.

Stage 2

Informed by the findings of Stage 1, three concept options were developed to explore different directions for Mill Lake Park over the horizon of the Master Plan. The three directions represented different balances on the scale of “urban park” to “nature park.” They also demonstrated interpretations of 7 Big Moves for the Park in a variety of ways to show different possibilities and approaches to achieving these moves.

Stage 3

Stage 3 aimed to advance a preferred concept plan based on community consultation as well as an implementation strategy. Stage 3 included:

- Developing and updating the Preferred Concept Plan to reflect input/comments
- Draft Phasing/Implementation Plan
- Developing a Draft Master Plan

The outcome of Stage 3 is a Park Master Plan reflecting public input and Council review.

Stage 4

With the Draft Master Plan reviewed, Stage 4 focuses on the finalization of the Master Plan and the transition to

implementation, which is supported by a Phasing Plan.

Stage 5

Stage 5 tasks are primarily actions that the City will undertake to implement the endorsed Master Plan. This future work is guided by direction from Council and is reliant on available funding, including the opportunity to leverage City resources with external funding and resource opportunities.