

REGIONAL PARKS PLAN

Draft I: Ideas and Options



April 7, 2014

www.whitehorse.ca/regionalparks



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Highlights | 2 |
| Process and Timeline | 4 |
| 1.0) Decision Making Framework | 5 |
| 1.1) Values-based Guiding Principles | 6 |
| 1.2) Vision statement options | 7 |
| 1.3) Goals and associated Strategies | 7 |
| 2.0) Background | 10 |
| 2.1) Why do we need a Regional Parks Plan? | 10 |
| 2.2) What is the Regional Parks Plan? | 11 |
| 2.3) How does the Regional Parks Plan connect to existing City Plans? | 12 |
| 2.4) How was the Regional Parks Plan developed? | 14 |
| 2.5) Where are we headed? | 14 |
| 2.6) Trends, opportunities, challenges | 14 |
| 3.0) Decision Making Context | 17 |
| 3.1) The current Regional Parks system | 17 |
| 3.2) Systems Planning Approach | 17 |
| 3.3) Roles and responsibilities | 18 |
| 3.4) Working with First Nations governments and communities | 19 |
| 4.0) Glossary | 20 |

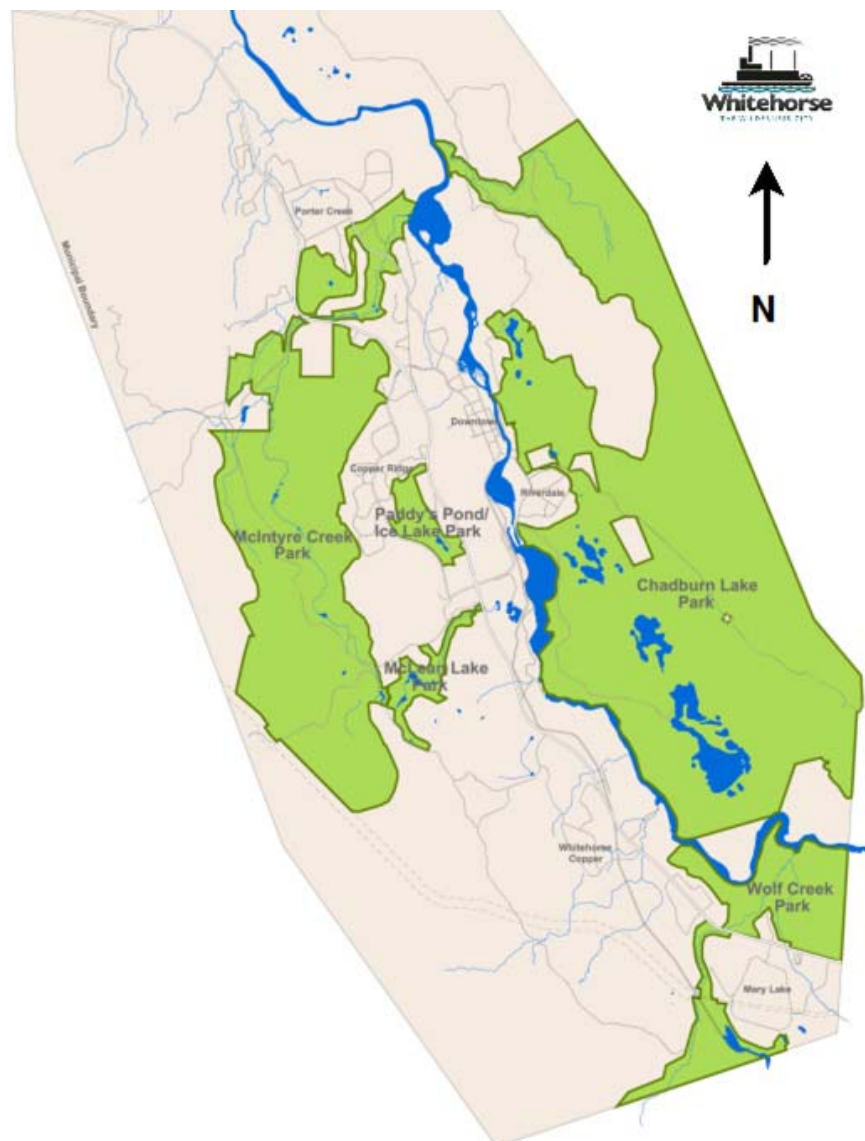
Highlights

Whitehorse's Regional Parks contribute to a healthy, resilient municipality by conserving natural assets, promoting a healthy society, and supporting sustainable prosperity. Regional Parks enhance the quality of life of residents and visitors by providing outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities to experience nature while simultaneously promoting ecological health by protecting and enhancing important natural landscapes. The Regional Parks system fosters environmental stewardship through community development and promotes a sense of responsibility and connection to the place that we live.

How were the Regional Parks created?

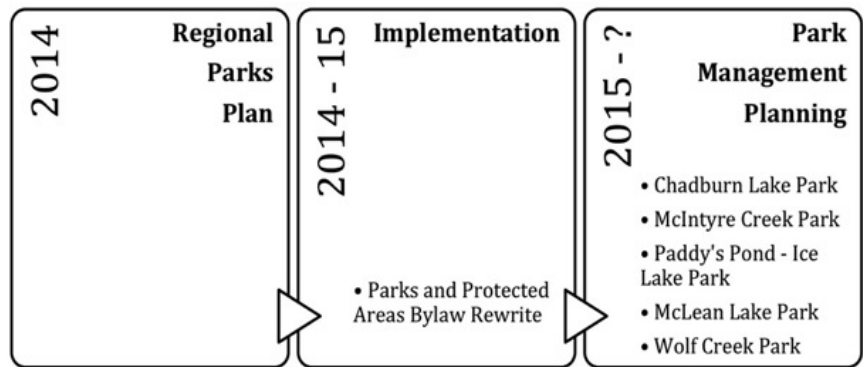
In 2010, as part of the creation of a new Official Community Plan, the City created five new Regional Parks based on strong community environmental and recreational values. Together, Chadburn Lake Park, McIntyre Creek Park, Paddy's Pond - Ice Lake Park, McLean Lake Park, and Wolf Creek Park cover over 30% of the total municipal area.

The years ahead are both exciting and important. Residents have a role to play in Regional Park planning and management. Decisions we reach together will literally shape the landscape of Whitehorse, and impact our quality of life and the surrounding natural environments we share.



What is the purpose of the Regional Parks Plan?

This 10 year Plan will set the future planning and management direction for the system of regional parks, and provide a decision-making framework. The Plan will be followed by an implementation schedule (2014-2015) as well as proposed individual park management plans (starting in 2015).



The Regional Parks Plan sets the tone and direction to ensure Whitehorse's Regional Parks remain healthy, beautiful and accessible for generations to come.

Lest we forget the values, features, and experiences the Regional Parks system embodies. Regional Parks represent the very reasons why so many residents choose to live, work, and play in Whitehorse: 'the Wilderness City'.

The Regional Parks Plan will ultimately address the following **Core Questions**:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Why are these Parks important?</i> | <i>(Values-based Guiding Principles)</i> |
| 2. <i>What do we want these Parks to be?</i> | <i>(Vision)</i> |
| 3. <i>What do we want these Parks to achieve?</i> | <i>(Goals)</i> |
| 4. <i>What needs to happen first?</i> | <i>(Priority Actions)</i> |
| 5. <i>What would 'success' look like?</i> | <i>(Outcomes)</i> |
| 6. <i>How should future decisions be made?</i> | <i>(Decision-making framework)</i> |
| 7. <i>Who will help make this Plan happen and how?</i> | <i>(Roles, responsibilities and partnerships)</i> |

What can the public participate?

Draft 1 provides ideas and options for consideration, namely for three of seven **Core Questions**:

- Draft Values-based Guiding Principles
- Draft Vision statement options
- Draft Goals and associated Strategies

We need your input! Where specific important public input is needed, look for this:

❖ What do you think?

One more thing: the City has limited resources. Therefore, the ability to actualize the goals outlined in this Plan will depend on our ability to be creative with existing resources, establish partnerships, and embrace the concept of 'crowd-sourcing'. The City needs your help exploring the seventh **Core Question**: Roles, Responsibilities and Partnerships. How can we be creative with existing resources and partnerships?

What is Draft #1 based on?

The first draft is based on:

- Public feedback from the first public engagement session (World Café) held March 11th
- Best practices for park planning and management
- Existing park planning models
- Initial plan parameters set by City Council

What happens next?

Until Wednesday April 23rd, the City is seeking feedback on Draft 1. Input can be submitted online or at the second public engagement event April 23rd (details online). Send input or questions to regionalparks@whitehorse.ca, or even easier, [answer our online survey](#). You could win a \$100 gift card to the Canada Games Centre!

The overall process will wrap up by early summer. Thanks for participating!

Process and Timeline

| | Values-based Guiding Principles | Vision | Goals and Strategies | Priority Actions | Outcomes | Decision-Making Framework | Roles, Responsibilities & Partnerships |
|-------------------------|---|--------|----------------------|------------------|----------|---------------------------|--|
| Mar 11 | World Cafe | | | | | | |
| Apr 7 | Draft 1: Ideas and Options | | | | | | |
| Apr 7 - Apr 23 | <i>What do you think?</i> | | | | | | <i>What do you think?</i> |
| May 14 | Draft 2: Ideas and Options | | | | | | |
| May 14 - May 29 | <i>Did we get it right?</i> | | | | | | |
| June 6 | Draft 3: Recommended Plan | | | | | | |
| June 16, June 23 | Council Introduction and Council Adoption | | | | | | |

 = Public Engagement Event

I.0) Decision Making Framework

I.1) Values-based Guiding Principles

Many decisions will be made along the way to achieving the City's vision for Regional Parks. Guiding Principles help us to navigate an increasingly complex decision-making environment where needs are diverse and sometimes competing. Guiding Principles will form the foundation for the decision-making criteria that will orient Regional Park planning and management, and are based on the values heard at the March 11th World Café.

These Draft Values-based Guiding Principles will answer the first **Core Question**:

< Why are these Parks important? > (Values-based Guiding Principles)



1) Thriving Environment

- **Education:** Through related programs, we strive to inform, inspire and involve residents to increase their understanding, respect, and connection to the nature
- **Integrity:** the City will protect and improve ecological health and resilience
- **Stewardship:** The City will work with all sectors to responsibly care for and manage Whitehorse's Regional Parks system

2) Vibrant Citizen and Community Development

- **Citizen engagement:** Whitehorse residents have opportunities for meaningful input into decisions about parks; the decision-making process is inclusive and transparent
- **Collaboration:** Through greater collaboration and partnerships with local neighbourhoods, communities of interest, the private sector and other governments, we increase value for residents and achieve common goals
- **Health and Wellness:** Regional Parks provide the spaces and places for emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health and wellness
- **Sustainable Prosperity:** Regional Park decisions reflect a commitment to economic, environmental, and social sustainability

3) Excellence in Planning and Management

- **Accountability:** Milestones and deliverables are established and Whitehorse residents receive timely information about progress in achieving desired outcomes
- **Continuous improvement and innovation:** We seek to improve our Regional Parks system by proactively monitoring, evaluating and implementing innovative parks management strategies
- **Integrated management:** Park management decisions consider the combined impacts of environmental, economic and social factors
- **Knowledge-based decision-making:** Decision-making is informed by natural and social science, evidence and experience, which include traditional knowledge of First Nation peoples
- **Leadership:** Regional Park management and operations demonstrate environmental leadership and showcase best practices in energy and water efficiency, environmental design, construction practices and products
- **Respectful and responsive:** We respect and respond to the diverse needs of parks users, stakeholders and communities throughout the municipality

❖ **What do you think of the above Values-based Guiding Principles?**

I.2) Vision Statement Options

The following draft vision statement options are based on the results of the March 11th World Café, where participants shared what they wanted Whitehorse's Regional Parks to be in the future.

The draft vision statement will answer the second **Core Question**:

< What do we want these Parks to be? > (Vision)

The City has created three draft Vision Statement options for your consideration:

Option #1: *Healthy Parks = Healthy People*

Option #2: *Residents and visitors discover, value, protect and enjoy Whitehorse's wild backyard*

Option #3: *Whitehorse's Regional Parks inspire people to discover, value, protect, and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations*

❖ What do you think of the draft Vision Statements?

Staff will present options and feedback to Council.

I.3) Goals and associated Strategies

The following Goals and associated Strategies are ideas based on the results of the March 11th World Café, external models, and best practices. The Regional Parks Plan is a commitment that the City, in collaboration with its partners, will accomplish these Goals within the Regional Parks system.

Important notes while reviewing the Goals and associated Strategies:

- The Goal number does not reflect an order of priority.
- Strategies have been included with each Goal and are listed with checkmarks.
- Each Goal and associated Strategy will have specified Actions which will be presented as Ideas and Options in Draft 2
- Specific probing questions for this Draft have been included with each goal and strategy.

The draft Goals and associated Strategies will answer the third **Core Question**:

< What do we want these Parks to achieve? > (Goals)

1. Promote environmental health

- ✓ Foster evidence-based decision-making
- ✓ Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- ✓ Manage Regional Parks to protect and improve ecological health and resilience
- ✓ Improve trail and facility location, design, development, and maintenance to minimize environmental degradation

- *How should we facilitate wildlife and trail connections to minimize Regional Parks as 'islands'?*
- *Given the City will continue to grow, how should we promote density in the urban core so that big spaces like Regional Parks can exist?*
- *Is horticulture and urban agriculture appropriate in any of these areas?*

2. Promote outdoor recreation for human health and wellness

- ✓ Implement an inclusion strategy to enhance user experiences
- ✓ Identify and develop opportunities for recreation
- ✓ Provide safe and well maintained outdoor recreation facilities to users
- ✓ Promote the physical and mental health benefits of Regional Parks and outdoor recreation

- *How do we balance human use and environmental health?*
- *Should we highlight recreation opportunity gaps?*
- *What should determine facility suitability?*

3. Support community stewardship, education, and partnerships

- ✓ Increase opportunities for residents, group and stakeholder involvement
- ✓ Provide education programs in Regional Parks to foster stewardship, health and wellness, personal safety and social responsibility
- ✓ Seek partnerships to deliver new and existing programs and provide special facilities where others have expertise

- *How do we maximize the value Regional Parks bring the wider community and vice versa?*

4. Communicate, connect and involve individual users

- ✓ Improve communication and outreach
- ✓ Encourage interest and opportunities in Regional Parks
- ✓ Ensure accountability through milestones and deliverables
- ✓ Develop tools to guide and enhance the use of parkland

- *How do we engage more people without compromising environmental integrity?*

5. Facilitate economic development and philanthropy

- ✓ Encourage philanthropy
- ✓ Partner with businesses and organizations to provide enhanced services
- *Which commercial activities are and are not appropriate in Regional Parks?*

6. Improve park planning and management

- ✓ Embrace the concept of Adaptive Management
- ✓ Improve the overall management of Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- ✓ Develop a plan to guide facility provision in specific Regional Parks
- ✓ Advance the quality and consistency of park lands and trails as identified in the Trails Plan
- ✓ Develop a process for nominating new Regional Parks
- ✓ Create a new Regional Parks Advisory Council
- ✓ Engage First Nations communities and explore options for joint management
- *How can we be creative with limited resources and potential partnerships?*

7. Offer modern facilities, services, programs, and policies

- ✓ Develop a classification system for all City parks and different areas within parks
- ✓ Upgrade, restore and expand park facilities
- ✓ Develop a central information system
- ✓ Review the existing Parks and Protected Areas Bylaw
- *How can we be creative with limited resources and potential partnerships?*

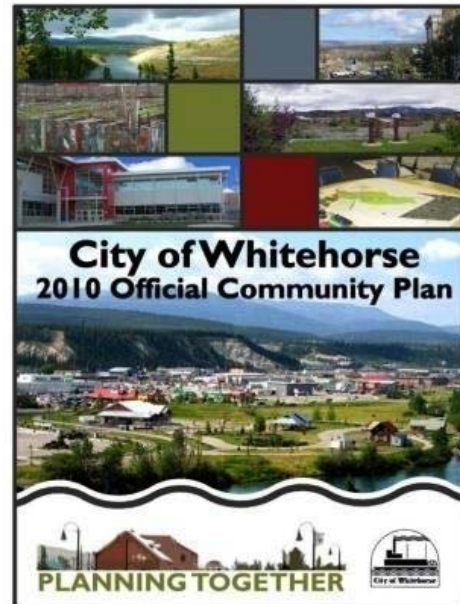
❖ What do you think of the above Goals and associated Strategies?

2.0) Plan Background

The [2010 Official Community Plan](#) (OCP) created five new parks: Chadburn Lake Park, McIntyre Creek Park, Paddy's Pond / Ice Lake Park, McLean Lake Park, and Wolf Creek Park.

"Preservation of green spaces for environmental and recreational values is an important part of the vision of Whitehorse. To help make this vision a reality, the Green Space Network Plan (p.31) shows five park areas for the future residents of Whitehorse to enjoy." (18.1 Parks, p.73)

These Parks were selected based on public input, available Vacant Commissioner's Land, aerial ground imagery, existing recreational infrastructure, identified Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's), and other City interests.



The City of Whitehorse offers a range of parks, such as neighbourhood playground-parks and event-parks, including Shipyards Park. The City is labelling the five new OCP parks as 'Regional Parks' given their respective size, location, and strong environmental and recreational values. This terminology is consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions, and generally describes an area of land preserved on account of its natural beauty, historic interest, recreational use, and under the administration of a form of local government. 'Municipal' or 'urban' parks are generally more developed and may include grassed areas, gardens, and extensive facilities such as Stanley Park in Vancouver, BC.

The City's wilderness setting is one of the reasons people choose to live, work and play in Whitehorse. Not surprisingly, during the 2010 OCP process residents associated strong recreational and environmental values in these areas. The establishment of Whitehorse's Regional Parks embody these values and will ensure future generations have access to wilderness at their doorstep. In total, about 30% of the land within the Municipal Boundary has been set-aside as Regional Park. (A further 33% has been identified as part of the wider Green Space Network Plan).

2.1) Why do we need a Regional Parks Plan?

The City needs a Regional Parks Plan for several reasons.

First, the 2010 OCP did not identify a vision for these Parks. Section 18 specifies: "the City will work with stewards, user groups and interested residents to further define these unique areas within the City, subject to City resources" (18.1.1, p.73). This is the starting point for the Regional Parks Plan: what do we want our Regional Parks to be and how do we get there?

Second, Whitehorse's population is growing which adds new pressures on the landscape. Given the environmental values and ESA's embodied by these Regional Parks, how do we balance human

activities with environmental health. Regional Parks are home to natural species, historic and cultural landmarks and breathtaking landscapes that could otherwise be compromised.

Third, while Regional Park designation is new, many facilities, programs, policies and services were developed in these areas for a smaller population and many are unable to meet the increasing and changing demand for a variety of outdoor recreation experiences.

Fourth, Whitehorse's Regional Parks have the potential to attract visitors from around the world, contributing tourism dollars to the community and creating a variety of jobs, such as guided mountain bike tours.

Finally, the potential value Regional Parks can bring the wider community will be amplified through creative partnerships, such as Yukon College, First Nation governments, and community organizations.

The Regional Parks Plan will provide the structure to be intentional with these places by establishing a vision, action-plan, and decision-making framework to guide future planning and management activities in Whitehorse's five Regional Parks.

2.2) What is the Regional Parks Plan?

The Regional Parks Plan is a planning framework that describes how decisions will be made regarding Whitehorse's Regional Parks. It takes into account the values and needs of residents and the important role Regional Parks play in the environmental, economic, recreational and cultural life of the City.

The Regional Parks Plan addresses the following key questions:

- 1) *Why are Regional Parks important?*
- 2) *What do we want Regional Parks to be?*
- 3) *What do we want Regional Parks to achieve?*
- 4) *What needs to happen first?*
- 5) *What does 'success' look like?*
- 6) *How should decisions be made?*
- 7) *Who will help make the Regional Parks Plan happen and how?*

As a response to the above questions, the Regional Parks Plan contains the follow deliverables:

- 1) A set of Guiding Principles based on community values
- 2) A Vision for Whitehorse's Regional Parks system
- 3) Goals and Strategies
- 4) Priority Actions
- 5) Desirable Outcomes
- 6) A Decision-Making Framework
- 7) Roles, responsibilities, and partnerships

2.3) How does the Regional Parks Plan connect to existing City Plans?

Although the Regional Parks Plan is a stand-alone-document, it is aligned with the City's 2010 Official Community Plan, the 2009 Strategic Sustainability Plan and other City Plans. This alignment ensures that Regional Park planning and management support the City's overall strategic direction.

Official Community Plan (2010)

The 2010 OCP planning process was the genesis of the five Regional Parks and 'park' designation in the OCP is the strongest level of designation afforded the City of Whitehorse, as legislated in the *Municipal Act*. 'Park' designation is a commitment to preserve these areas as parks for future generations.

The OCP substantiates 'park' designation by providing guidance in the form of 'Recreation Areas' and 'Environmentally Sensitive Areas' as part of the Green Space Network Plan (p.31).

Furthermore, the OCP stipulates the following park-specific policies:

- *Named and identified boundaries for the five parks to include natural features, recreation facilities, trails and ESA's (18.1, p.73)*
- *Prioritization of Trail Plan implementation measures shall be considered for these Park areas (18.1, p.73)*
- *The City will work with stewards, user groups and interested residents to further define these unique areas within the City, subject to City resources (18.1, p.73).*
- *The City may request that the Commissioner of the Yukon amend or remove the existing Order in Council in order to have it more accurately reflect the intended area for park preservation as shown on Map 6, and/or to have full jurisdiction and control of the park given to the City. This change to the Order in Council would open up already developed areas along the Highway for further development and protect areas that are environmentally sensitive or used for recreation (18.2, p.73)*
- *A comprehensive new management plan for the entire Chadburn Lake Park, Grey Mountain and Long Lake area may be prepared and should emphasize the protection of the watershed and the integrity of natural and heritage features (18.3, p.73)*
- *The Hidden Lakes, Ear Lake and Chadburn Lake areas have excellent wildlife viewing potential and offer opportunities for features to be developed to encourage wildlife appreciation and education. Such features based on site-specific analysis shall be integrated with other park planning initiatives (18.4, p.73)*
- *A multi-use design philosophy, rather than single purpose, shall be considered in design and development of new public recreation facilities (18.5, p.73)*

Strategic Sustainability Plan (2008)

While Regional Parks originated in the 2010 OCP, the 2008 Strategic Sustainability Plan (SSP) laid the foundation for the 2010 OCP and certainly influenced Regional Park creation. Specifically, Regional Parks can be traced directly and indirectly to the following SSP Guiding Principles:

- **Thriving Environment:** Stewardship of the natural environment and recognition of its intrinsic value and importance for quality of life. ☐☐
- **Community Development:** Decisions on development, land use, infrastructure, energy and transportation shall be integrated to minimize our ecological footprint. ☐☐
- **Leadership:** Long-horizon community leadership true to our principles of sustainable development and global responsibility. ☐☐☐☐
- **Cultural identity:** We celebrate cultural diversity that strengthens the uniqueness of our northern community. ☐☐
- **Education:** Empower every generation to entrench sustainability in education with the benefit of shared northern knowledge.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2007) and Trails Plan (2007)

The 2007 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and 2007 Trails Plan were written before the Regional Parks were established. However, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the need to develop a park management plan in the Chadburn Lake area. Furthermore, the Trails Plan outlined and prioritized the development of Whitehorse’s trail network throughout the City with many trails in areas now part of Regional Parks, between 2007 and 2017.

Yukon River Corridor Plan (1999)

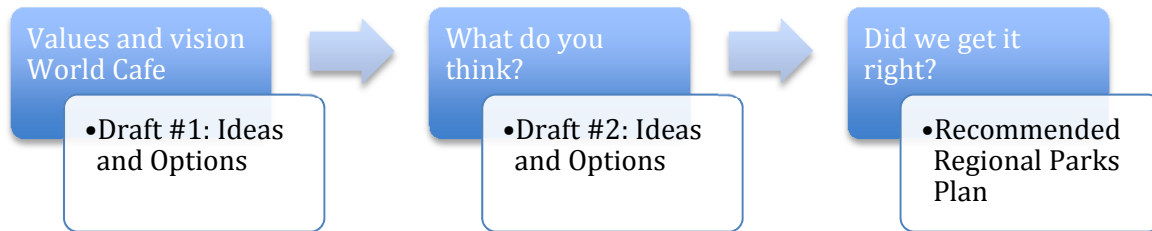
Council adopted the Yukon River Corridor Plan in 1999 as a guiding document for future planning within the municipal boundaries of the Yukon River corridor. The overall land use and preservation goals, which were designed to guide planning for the Yukon River corridor, are reflected in the following statements:

- Respect the range of natural wilderness environments afforded by the Yukon River Corridor
- Draw people to the Yukon River to appreciate and experience the ecology, natural and human history
- Accommodate a range of outdoor and recreation activities that are compatible with the natural setting and character of the River
- Encourage land use, tourism, and recreational pursuits that complement Corridor potential and the established built environment of the City
- Blend new facilities built in the non-urban area of the Corridor with their surroundings through extensive use of natural materials to complement the environment
- Emphasize linking of green spaces to accommodate people’s desires for a wilderness experience, while preserving appropriate travel Corridors for wildlife

The Yukon River Corridor Plan informed the 2010 OCP and the identification of the Green Space Network Plan and Regional Parks. Principles outlined in the Yukon River Corridor Plan are reflected in the Regional Parks Plan in a wider Yukon River valley context, and with particular attention to Chadburn Lake Park, Wolf Creek Park, and McIntyre Creek Park, which are adjacent to the Yukon River.

2.4) How was the Regional Parks Plan developed?

The Regional Parks Plan was (is being) developed based on a combination of public engagement, best practices, and creative ideas.



(Note: this section to be fleshed out as the planning process progresses)

2.5) Where are we headed?

The passion that Whitehorse residents feel for their Regional Parks is evident in feedback received during the Regional Parks Plan and 2010 OCP processes. Their dreams and hopes for the future (will help) helped shape this plan.

We will know the Regional Parks Plan is a success if, in 10 years:

- ✓ Regional Parks are recognized and supported as an essential public good for the role they play in conservation, outdoor recreation and tourism
- ✓ Whitehorse is recognized internationally for the beauty and diversity of its landscapes and for the steps it has taken to conserve this legacy for future generations
- ✓ Parks are safe, enjoyable and accessible for residents to explore their culture and their connection to the land, and where visitors from around the world are welcome
- ✓ Aboriginal communities are engaged in the delivery of parks programs and the protection of culturally significant sites and landscapes
- ✓ Regional Parks support a variety of healthy ecosystems that, in turn, support a diversity of flora and fauna
- ✓ Whitehorse residents are proud of the modern facilities that the parks system offers
- ✓ Whitehorse has an interconnected system of parks and recreational trails that enhance quality of life for citizens by providing easy access to nature and recreation experiences
- ✓ Regional Parks offer a variety of learning experiences that inform, inspire and involve visitors
- ✓ The public and private sectors (for-profit and not-for-profit) work together to meet the social, environmental, economic and cultural needs of our community through the Regional Parks system

2.6) Trends, opportunities, challenges

Whitehorse's population growth is expected to continue growing. To accommodate future growth without further sprawl, the OCP aims to create compact, complete, healthy communities.

Identifying the Green Space Network Plan and establishing Regional Parks is one part of achieving

that goal. The Regional Parks Plan supports the OCP by protecting lands for recreation as well as conserving and enhancing natural features and community connectivity.

Past population growth and associated impacts of urban development have compromised the health and function of the City's natural environment. The key challenge of the Regional Parks Plan is to help promote municipal ecological health and maintain the health of Regional Parks while providing good access to outdoor facilities and amenities. To accomplish this, the Regional Parks Plan address the following issues:

➤ ***Protecting the natural environment***

The natural landscapes within the municipal boundary are highly valued for their scenic beauty. Nevertheless, it is for the basics of life - their 'ecosystem services' - that our natural assets require our utmost attention. Ecosystem services include vital benefits like water purification, biodiversity, pollination, clean air, and stable, fertile soil.

A network of Regional Parks connected through the wider Green Space Network Plan is necessary in order to maintain a resilient natural system that ensures room for ecological processes to occur, allows for species movement between patches, provides opportunity for gene flow between individuals and populations, and is resilient to disease and the possible impacts of climate change. The challenge is to maintain and enhance these assets for the benefit of current and future generations while accommodating increasing population and associated urban development. The large natural areas contained in Regional Parks play an important role in maintaining regional ecosystem services. Parks also provide an important opportunity to provide public education about such topics as climate change sequestration, water filtration, biodiversity, and hydrology.

Increasing competition for use of the land also highlights the need for enforcement of the rules that guide responsible use. We need policies and resources to actively monitor the parks and enforce sizeable penalties when necessary.

➤ ***Supporting public health, wellness and outdoor recreation***

Across North America, two trends have been identified as acting to reduce the physical and mental well being of people. The first is a dramatic rise in the number of serious health issues (e.g.: Type II diabetes and obesity) due, in part, to sedentary lifestyles. The second trend is lack of contact with and understanding of nature. Research indicates that access to green space tends to improve overall physical and mental health; therefore investing in Regional Parks is part of improving the health and wellness of residents. Creating healthy complete communities requires, in part, providing access to a diversity of activities and experiences that encourage all people regardless of age, background or ability, to connect with their community and with nature. In a city where private outdoor space is becoming a luxury and residents highly value outdoor recreation, the City is aiming to improve quality of life for residents by providing good access to public open space close to home.

➤ ***Embracing creative partnerships***

Budgets are being stretched in municipalities across Canada. Partnering is increasingly a key component of the City of Whitehorse's overall operations. On occasion, the City finds that it is more efficient to enter into agreements with other organizations to operate said activity independently. These relationships are developed as required to meet unique circumstances, which emerge over time. The best way to maximize outcomes for the public is to take advantage of complementary expertise, mutual interests, organizational capabilities, and budgets and staff resources. Fundamentally, partnerships should be embraced with the spirit of maximizing the value Regional Parks bring the wider community.

➤ ***Maintaining public access while protecting the integrity of ESA's***

Regional Parks will be operated and managed in a manner that ensures reasonable public access either immediately or in the future. From a conservation perspective, some highly sensitive sites (ESA's) may provide value to the region without providing human access. In these situations the City will provide interpretation from adjacent sites or limited access under controlled circumstances.

3.0) Decision Making Context

3.1) The current Regional Parks system

The 2010 OCP created the Green Space Network Plan (GSNP) which covers about two thirds of the City's total area, to protect areas identified as either:

- Recreation Areas
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Green 'Connections' Areas

The GSNP provided the foundation for the five Regional Parks, which include many natural features, recreation facilities, trails and environmentally sensitive areas. As a result, the City set aside more parkland, by percentage and by total area, of any municipality in Canada. Chadburn Lake Park is the largest park in a Canadian Municipality. Whitehorse's Regional Parks system comprises just over 30% of the total City area, or 12,655 hectares.

There are five Regional Parks within the system, offering a rich diversity of opportunity and uses while conserving natural values and features.

Whitehorse's regional parks range in size:

- Chadburn Lake Park 7550 ha
- McIntyre creek Park 3620 ha
- Wolf Creek Park 1100 ha
- McLean Lake Park 195 ha
- Paddy's Pond - Ice Lake Park 190 ha

Regional Parks do not operate in isolation from other lands and neighbourhoods. They have an intricate relationship with surrounding areas. Good decision-making will depend on science and our ability to identify linkages and understand the broader inter-relationships and impacts.

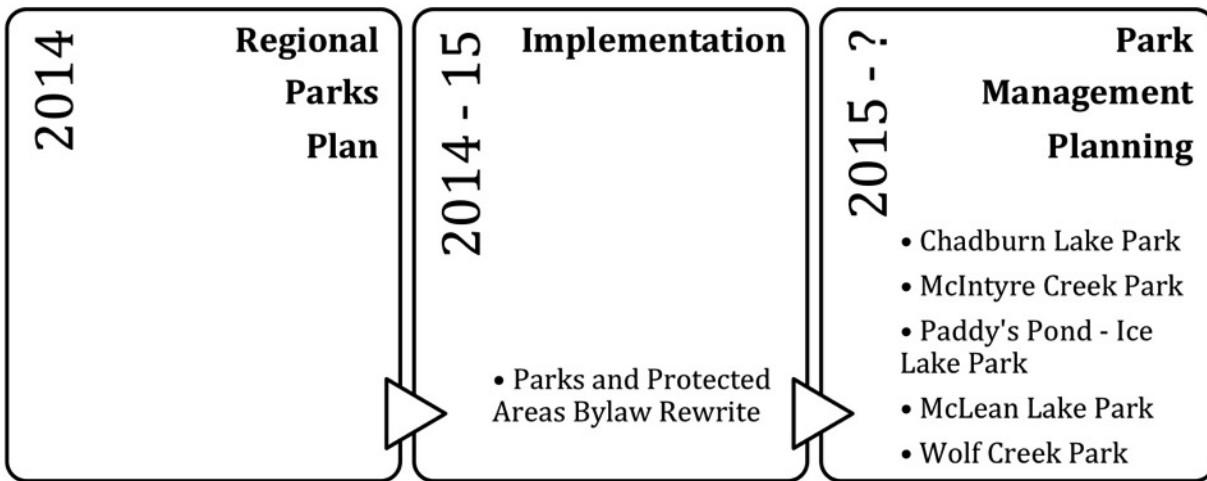
3.2) Systems Planning Approach

A modified 'systems planning' approach will be used to develop one Regional Parks Plan for the five Regional Parks. This is a common approach in park planning and used across Canada in various forms. The systems planning approach offers a practical and holistic way of looking at the entire regional parks network in a wider context by:

- Taking a holistic view of parks and how they work together to achieve goals
- Having the goal of a system that provides both natural environments for conservation and recreation, and possibly other values
- Facilitates 'raising the gaze' to view the big picture at the system level
- Increases efficiency by reducing planning duplication

The Regional Parks Plan is the first step towards park management planning by providing high-level direction. Future management planning will explore park-specific elements. Just as the OCP

guides neighbourhood planning, so to shall the Regional Parks Plan guide park management planning. Like the OCP, the Regional Parks Plan will provide broad direction for Regional Parks.



The direction set out in the Regional Parks Plan will determine the Implementation Schedule’s goals. Regardless, the City will start the Parks and Protected Areas Bylaw Rewrite process based on direction provided by the Regional Parks Plan.

Council has expressed interest in starting park-specific management planning in 2015. The most likely scenario is Council dedicates resources towards the development of one park management plan, or possibly two, as a pilot. No commitments have been made.

3.3) Current roles and responsibilities

The City of Whitehorse is the administrator of Regional Parks. The Planning Services Department is leading the Regional Parks Plan process, in close collaboration with Outreach and Events (which leads trail planning). Other Departments with key interests include: Environmental Sustainability, Bylaw Services, and Parks and Trails (park and trail management). The involvement of five Departments is to ensure consistency and continuity of the Regional Parks Plan as it relates to other City activities and commitments.

The City has traditionally focused its recreation efforts on providing or supporting facilities for active sports with conservation and nature based recreation making up an important but minor portion of the services they provide. The Regional Parks Plan recognizes the need for connections to Regional Parks to advance outdoor recreation services and environmental stewardship.

The City of Whitehorse also works with a number of partners who will hopefully play an important role in developing, maintaining and sustaining Regional Parks.

Partners include:

- Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Ta'an kwach'an Council
- Yukon College
- Conservation organizations
- Neighbourhood Associations
- Non-governmental organizations
- Regional Park visitors
- Private sector
- Recreation interest groups
- Tourism authorities
- Volunteers
- Youth

3.4) Working with First Nations governments and communities

The City of Whitehorse recognizes the constitutionally protected rights of Aboriginal peoples, and the unique relationship that Aboriginal communities have with the land.

While the City has the legislative mandate to manage Regional Park, it also has a duty to consult with Aboriginal communities where decisions may adversely impact their constitutionally protected Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights. The goal is to reach a meaningful balance that respects the rights of Aboriginal communities and the interests of all Whitehorse residents.

In addition to respecting their constitutional rights, the City values the unique perspective that Aboriginal communities offer. The City will make special efforts to reach out to Aboriginal communities to encourage participation in Regional Park planning and management. The City will also explore the possible development and delivery of interpretive activities in partnership with the Aboriginal community.

4.0) GLOSSARY

Adaptive Management: a dynamic management approach which uses the best science or information available to write and implement policies and practices then monitors and makes changes as necessary to achieve the desired outcome. Through monitoring, assessment and collaboration with partners, planning and management activities continue to adapt in response to new information and employ the 'precautionary principle' to ensure the ecological and cultural values are not compromised

Access: Allowing or enabling entry, approach or use of an area.

Biodiversity: The assortment of life on earth including the variety of genetic material in all living things, the variety of species on earth and the various kinds of living communities and the environments in which they all occur

Conservation: The responsible preservation, management and care of our land and of our natural resources

Ecological Integrity: Ecosystems have integrity when they have their native components (plants, animals and other organisms) and processes (such as growth and reproduction) intact

Ecosystems: The interaction between all organisms (including humans) and their physical environment. Ecosystem health/integrity refers to the adequate structure and functioning of an ecosystem, as described by scientific information and societal priorities

Economic: Relating to the wealth of an individual, business, community or a nation

Environment: The components of the earth – including air, land, water, all layers of the atmosphere, all organic and inorganic matter and living organism, and all of their interacting natural systems

Environmentally Sensitive Areas: Areas that support or protected the environment. ESA's are determined to have high wildlife values and high environmental sensitivity, where protection of natural areas, wildlife habitat, and ecological values is ensured. Community enjoyment of these areas is encouraged and balanced with minimal disturbance, development, or intervention. Trails, interpretation, research and education are permitted in these ESA's.

Facility: Could include campgrounds, picnic sites, trails, buildings, visitor centres, staging areas, water and sewer systems, and all other infrastructure that could supports park visitor experiences

Inclusion: Ensuring facilities and programs are designed so that everyone's needs are considered regardless of age, ability or disability, economic standing or other factors

Land: The entire complex of surface attributes including air, water, and the solid portions of the earth

Natural heritage: The geological features and landforms, associated biodiversity, and ecosystem functions of a defined area

Park land: Land set aside from disposition as public park area

Regional Park: Includes five new City of Whitehorse parks as identified in the 2010 OCP

Recreation: All those things that a person or group chooses to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more personally satisfying

Stewardship: An ethic whereby citizens, industry, communities and governments work together to responsibly care for and manage Whitehorse's natural resources and environment

Watershed: The area of land that catches precipitation and drains into a larger body of water such as a marsh, stream, river or lake, and can range in size from a few hectares to thousands of hectares