



Calgary Parks ZBR Final Implementation Update

2019 October 8





Parks ZBR Final Implementation Update

Background

In 2019 January, the Priorities and Finance committee received an update (PFC2019-0041 – Attachment 1) regarding the approved Parks ZBR (PFC2014-0470). It highlighted successful gains through the following recommendations:

Recommendation Topic	Description
1 Performance Management & Maintenance Standards	1) Improving accountability and productivity by implementing maintenance standards across the city; 2) developing a consistent and formal performance management system for staff; and, 3) implementing the efficiency and effectiveness performance measures developed for all major lines of service.
2 Increased Productivity	Increasing the productivity of seasonal staff through changes to existing practices.
3 Cost Savings	Expansion of third party contracting and the potential increase of naturalization in selected park spaces.
4 Levels of Service Provisions	Investigate further the planning and development process through which assets are acquired to ensure the growing asset portfolio is sustainable.
5 Playfields Utilization & Cost Recovery	Develop a playfield strategy in conjunction with Recreation and to increase the hourly rate of playfield rentals to recover 50% of the maintenance costs.
6 Other Recommendations	Six recommendations that supplement others made through the ZBR. They include improving communication and enhancing collaboration across service lines.



(Cont'd) Background

Initial estimates indicated that once fully implemented, \$4.3 million in total financial benefits could be achieved through a mix of productivity gains, cost savings and increased revenue generation. In addition to these quantifiable financial benefits, there are other equally important service efficiency gains resulting from improved processes related to staff schedules and transfers, greater accountability, a higher level of customer service and environmental benefits. The Parks zero-based-review also provided opportunities to encourage staff innovation and support for their ideas.



Progress Update

The Parks ZBR is now complete, and was very successful. Recommendations from the Parks ZBR has resulted in a savings of \$3.0 million.

One service that will not see full implementation of the administration recommendations is the Playfield Utilization and Cost Recovery. In conjunction with Recreation, Parks has completed and is now implementing work from the Sport Field Strategic Plan. The recommendation to increase cost recovery for playfields to the levels originally identified in the ZBR were not achievable because further analysis demonstrated that most fees for adults are within a best practice range. Only the fees for youth were substantially below the 50th percentile. As such, this would neither generate the revenue anticipated nor be a citizen centric direction. The \$1.2 million in savings was instead achieved through a mix of productivity gains, additional efficiencies within parks maintenance and reducing tax funded support of Cemeteries operations to move towards the long term goals to make cemeteries more self-sufficient. Parks has now moved entirely into sustainment activities as they relate to the 6 recommendations and the Parks ZBR is complete.

Recommendations	Originally Predicted	2015	2016	2017	2018	Row Total
Increased Productivity	\$570,000	\$180,000	\$303,000			\$483,000
Playfield Utilization and Cost Recovery	\$1,240,000					\$0
Level of Service Provisions						\$0
Cost Savings	\$2,500,000	\$577,000	\$454,000	\$857,000	\$657,000	\$2,545,000
Total ZBR Savings Per Year	\$4,310,000	\$757,000	\$757,000	\$857,000	\$657,000	\$3,028,000

Going Forward

The Parks ZBR process has led to successful and sustainable changes in Parks resulting in a continuous improvement mindset focusing on cost-effective delivery, including actively encouraging staff to be innovative and think about ways to make business improvements.



(Cont'd) Going Forward

Examples of this are how Parks staff are encouraged to bring forward pilot initiatives such as:

Targeted Weed Control Using Goats (2016-ongoing)

Parks *Our BiodiverCity* plan highlights managing invasive species as one of Calgary Parks' biggest challenges. 'Legislated' weeds are the top priority and public concerns over herbicide use prompted trying other ideas – i.e. Biological control – through the use of goat herds.

Citizen Science in the City of Calgary (2017-ongoing)

In 2017 Calgary Parks adopted citizen science as a tool to inspire Calgarians to participate in citywide biodiversity stewardship action. This project pairs cost-effective wildlife monitoring tools (trail cameras) with volunteers to review captured data and improve Parks' understanding of wildlife habitat use and movement around our urban environment.

Customer Level of Service (CLOS) (2017-ongoing)

Customer Level of Service (CLOS) is the cornerstone of the Parks Asset Management Plan. Customer Level of Service is an objective method of measuring citizen's expectations of the service that Calgary Parks spaces provide and City Council's priorities. A park or community's CLOS score is comprised of scoring against a number of Service Categories which have associated Service Criterion and Attributes.

Volunteer Supported Douglas Fir Trail Rehab (2017)

Calgary Parks hired CMBA (Calgary Mountain Bike Alliance) which have expertise in sustainable trail building with volunteers. The goal of this project was to make the trail alignment reasonably safe for users and to educate the public on the inherent risks of a recreational trail. Parks organized the mobilization of volunteers on site, while CMBA supervised the volunteers to rehabilitate the trail that is now open to the public. This completed project has led to exploring other partnership opportunities with CMBA.

Flanders Field Poppies – Memorial Drive (2016-ongoing)

Calgary Parks was struggling with growing flowers and trees in the center median on Memorial Drive since it's redevelopment. Working on medians was dangerous and expensive due to lane closures, and was also disruptive to the flow of traffic. Parks needed a different solution. The soil was amended with minerals and supplements to lower the salt content and improve the growing medium in the center median planters. To stay consistent with the 'theme' of Memorial Drive, Flanders Field Poppies were trialed as plant material. To date the project has been very successful in reducing the work required in the medians and we consistently receive positive feedback from Calgarians.

Improving Park Access / Responding to Customers Desires

- Mobile Adventure Playgrounds (2016-ongoing)
- Senior Mobile Fitness Park (2018)
- Community Adventure Playgrounds (2018)
- Community Park Initiative (2018-ongoing)
- Dockless Bike Share (Liveable Streets/Calgary Parks) (2018-ongoing)

The Parks Leadership Team meets twice a year, first to plan for the upcoming year and then to debrief the year and make recommendations going forward. Parks will also continue to work with other business units to provide cost-effective services to the citizens of Calgary such as the pilot initiative to transfer oversight of sidewalk snow and ice clearing from Roads to Parks.

