

Clearwater Legacy Park Update

This information update is being provided to Legacy Parks Fund Steering Committee in advance of the preferred concept plan and Design Development Plan report going to Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services and Council in 2015 Q4 .

Executive Summary

Clearwater Legacy Park is an important parcel of open space that will allow for the and protection of key watershed areas along the Elbow River. The dynamic Elbow River system and associated riparian communities contribute to this site's high level of environmental significance. Current uses include group camping activities at the Clearwater Park Tipi Site, archery at the Calgary Archery Club lease area, and informal visits by neighbouring residents, mostly for walking and dog walking.

Clearwater Legacy Park is located 7.2 km west of Calgary's city limits, north of Highway 8 (Glenmore Trail), along the Elbow River. The entire future park consists of 383 hectares (947 acres), portions of which are owned by Rocky View County. The park land owned by the City is approximately 65 hectares (160 acres). The City acquired the site in 1979 through a donation of lands from the Devonian Group of Charitable Foundations. The purpose of the acquisition was to promote the preservation of unique riparian habitats along the Elbow River and to offer recreation opportunities for residents in the region.

This project involved the preparation of a preliminary design for the City-owned portion of Clearwater Legacy Park. The planning was accomplished through a comprehensive design and community engagement process with input from City staff (internal stakeholders), external stakeholders and the public.

The following vision statement emerged from the public engagement process:

Clearwater Legacy Park is a unique legacy park, representing the nature and culture of the lands surrounding Calgary. It is an oasis, focusing on nature conservation and environmental education. The site is a jewel that protects what is precious; land, air, water, and natural areas. The park is connected to the regional trail system.

The following main objectives emerged through the public engagement process:

Protect environmental resources, including the wildlife corridor through the valley and the habitats within the park.

Provide interpretive information along with nature and cultural education programs.

Manage use to minimize conflicts among uses and impacts on habitat, addressing the need for use guidelines and standards for etiquette.

Plan the major park amenities to be **universally accessible**.

Improve the opportunity for the "tipi camping" experience (ie: rustic, nature-oriented experience).

Establish trails that connect the park with the regional trail system.

Access to the river, respecting risk management considerations.

The Province of Alberta (Alberta Transportation) is planning to twin Highway 8 adjacent to the park, and this may require altering portions of the plan to accommodate stormwater ponds or wetlands. The timing of the highway expansion¹ has not been confirmed by The Province.

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Preferred Concept Plan

