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Subject: Linear Parks

Hi everyone,

Thank you for participating in the discussion last night.

I wanted to react (and add this to the public record) to last night's discussion about parks and open space, and specifically about linear parks. The term "linear park" has been thrown around quite a bit, but unless we add clarity, vision, and definition around what that kind of park means for Hood River, the current Master Plan draft from the city Parks and Rec department will not include linear parks. It isn't enough to say "we should have linear parks." The people of the town need to understand what those kinds of parks are and agree on their value, and then Parks & Rec, or the Planning Commission, needs to produce clear recommendations to send to the City Council.

The current Master Plan draft on the Parks & Rec website mentions "linear parks" twice in 259 pages (http://hoodriverparksandrec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/HRV_PMP_composite_v-020719lores.pdf). The phrase "linear parks" functions as a synonym for "trail." Furthermore, in Appendix G on Recreational Trends, linear parks are not mentioned. There is no vision or description of those parks or how they become part of the fabric of the city's outdoor life.

Linear parks have boomed in urban areas, particularly in cities lacking sufficient acreage for new community parks (i.e. Chicago, NYC, etc.). I wondered how linear parks fit into the scale of a smaller community like ours. What I found suggests that linear parks certainly could be an excellent addition to the parks inventory in Hood River and provide a way to connect many parts of the town. I found an excellent example of a city master plan for linear parks from the Canadian city of Kelowna. The link: https://www.kelowna.ca/sites/files/1/docs/parks-rec/2009-11-18_linear_parks_master_plan-web.pdf

Although Kelowna is quite a bit larger than Hood River (pop of Kelowna about 150,000), its size is closer to ours than that of other cities mentioned last night (NYC, Chicago, Atlanta, etc.) and so its experience with linear parks may be useful. Its physical properties are similar to ours too; it's described as "surrounded by provincial parks, pine forest, vineyards, orchards and mountains. Its downtown area incorporates waterfront City Park and a lakeside cultural district. More than 20 local vineyards offer wine tours and tastings."

In addition to providing the link to their plan, which I think you commissioners would benefit from looking through, I think our own Parks master plan should develop some of these ideas. Frankly, the work in the Kelowna master plan seems well enough done that it could easily be incorporated into our plans, from their vision to their design elements. We don't always have to pay a consultant to do work that already has been done, do we? The recommendations

you are sending on the importance of bikes and pedestrian enhancements to the city imply that linear parks are something we expect in the city. But expectations alone won't get them.

I also emailed the head of Kelowna's Urban Planning department to ask what their experience in using the plan has been over the last 10 years. I asked for the positive things they've learned as well as anything he might suggest are pitfalls or things to be cautious about. I got his out-of-office response, but in early September when he returns from being out, I hope to hear from him. If I do, I'll share his experiences. His name is Terry Barton, and I emailed him at

tbarton@kelowna.ca

Thanks for your attention, and for not rubber-stamping a Parks & Rec document that, despite being 259 pages long, is quite short on details in several important areas.

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