

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Background:

Where did these Parks come from?

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

Why and how were these Parks selected?

'Why' these Parks were selected is described in the 2010 OCP, '18.1 Parks' (p.73):

"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."

'How' these Parks were selected was based on input from the public during the development of the OCP in conjunction with other City interests and Vacant Commissioner's Land.

What do these Parks contain?

The five Regional Parks include many things that we value as a community: natural features, recreation facilities, trails, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas as identified in the 2010 OCP (p.73).

Why call them Regional Parks?

The City of Whitehorse offers a range of parks, such as neighbourhood playground-parks and event-parks, including Shipyards Park. Given the size, location, and values the new 'OCP parks' represent, the City wishes to distinguish these OCP parks by calling them 'Regional Parks'. 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 or other reason, and under the administration of a form of local government" (source: [Wikipedia](#)). 'Municipal' or 'urban' parks are generally more developed and may include grassed areas, gardens, and facilities such as Stanley Park in Vancouver, BC.

Why are these Regional Parks important?

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 we heard that Whitehorse residents associate 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 a 30% of the land within the Municipal Boundary has been set-aside as Regional Park.

These Parks are in the 2010 OCP; why do we need another plan?

The 2010 OCP set aside these five Parks for the residents of Whitehorse. However, what these Parks represent needs to be fleshed out. More importantly, the OCP does not identify a vision for these Parks. Section 18.1.1 in the OCP (p.73) 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”.

The Regional Parks Plan will establish a vision, action-plan, and decision-making framework which will guide future management planning in these parks.

What has City Council committed to?

Council committed resources for ‘OCP Park Planning’ in the [2014 Capital Budget](#). Council has expressed interest in park-specific management planning in 2015.

Planning Approach:

What type of planning approach are you proposing?

A ‘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. Systems planning 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 objectives
- 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

Why aren’t you developing five park-specific management plans?

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.

Are there examples of park systems plans?

Park systems plans come in various forms and range in comprehensiveness. However, common elements often include: a vision, goals and objectives, priority actions, measurable outcomes, a decision-making framework, roles, responsibilities, and partnerships.

Below are four park plan examples, which use the systems planning approach.

- [Alberta Parks Plan](#)
- [Nanaimo Regional Parks and Trails Plan](#)
- [Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Plan](#)
- [Toronto Parks Plan](#)

Will the public be involved?

Yes. There will be multiple opportunities for public engagement. The City will work with stakeholders to ensure that concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the final Regional Parks Plan.

What types of questions will this process address?

The Regional Parks Plan will address the following questions:

- Why are these Parks important? (Values)
- What do we want these Parks to be? (Vision)
- What needs to happen first? (Priority Actions)
- What would 'success' look like? (Outcomes)
- How should future decisions be made? (Decision-making framework)
- Who will help make this Plan happen and how? (Roles, responsibilities, and partnerships)

When will the Regional Parks Plan be completed?

The Regional Parks Plan will be completed before this summer (2014)

Direction from the 2010 OCP:

What is an OCP?

As outlined in the 2010 OCP:

The purpose and content of an OCP is formally outlined in the Yukon Municipal Act. The 2010 OCP has been adopted by a bylaw, which means all future land use decisions made by Council must be consistent

with the objectives and policies outlined in the Plan. An OCP, however, is not intended to be a static document, but should adapt to new trends within society and respond to changing circumstances including, but not limited to, population growth, housing demand, and public interest. As such, following careful consideration by Council, policies and land use designations in the Plan may be revised by an amending bylaw pursuant to provisions outlined within the Municipal Act. It is important to note that the OCP is not a regulatory document, such as a zoning bylaw. The OCP should guide development through broad land use policy, while regulatory tools, such as densities, setbacks, and other development standards should be administered through the Zoning Bylaw.

What does OCP designation of these Regional Parks mean?

The designation of these Parks in the 2010 OCP is the strongest level of designation afforded the City of Whitehorse, as legislated in the *Municipal Act*.

What do these Park boundaries mean?

The five Regional Parks' boundaries, as outlined in the OCP, are a commitment to preserve these areas as parks for future generations.

What does the term 'park' mean?

The term 'park' is not definitively defined within the City of Whitehorse. The *Municipal Act* does not allow the City to have legislation, therefore, unlike the Yukon Government, the City does not have an act which stipulates what a 'park' is. However, the OCP does provide guidance in the form of 'Recreation Areas' and 'Environmentally Sensitive Areas' as part of the Green Space Network Plan (p.31). Furthermore, the [Zoning Bylaw](#) contains regulations, which pertain to these Regional Parks.

The Regional Parks Plan process is our opportunity to better define what these Regional Parks mean.

Why not halt other Municipal activities occurring in these park areas until the Parks Plan is completed?

Municipal decisions that have been made since the adoption of the 2010 OCP have been guided by the direction set out in the OCP. Therefore, the City views it unnecessary to place a halt on ongoing Municipal activities taking place in these areas.

Once adopted, the Regional Parks Plan will guide future decision-making in the City's Regional Parks System.

What about the 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 helped inform the 2010 OCP and the identification of the Green Space Network Plan and Regional Parks. The Yukon River Corridor Plan will be considered in the development of the Regional Parks Plan in a wider Yukon River valley context, with particular attention to Chadburn Lake Park, Wolf Creek Park, and McIntyre Creek Park, all of which touch the Yukon River.

Why did the map boundaries for Chadburn Lake Park change in the 2013 reprinting of the 2010 OCP?

Three First Nation parcels were removed from Chadburn Lake Park. Therefore, the map boundary was revised in June 2013. Chadburn Lake Park area was revised from 8050 hectares to 7550 hectares.

Land Ownership:

Who owns and administers the land in these park areas?

All lands contained within these five Regional Parks are Commissioner's Land. Given these Park areas fall within City limits, the City is leading this process as directed through the OCP, which identified these areas as City of Whitehorse (Regional) Parks under the authority of the *Yukon Municipal Act*.

The City is working in close collaboration with Yukon Government on the Regional Parks Plan.

How are First Nations Involved?

None of the lands that fall within these Regional Parks include First Nation land. However, the City recognizes these areas comprise Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council traditional territory lands and is, therefore, working with these Governments to identify areas of mutual interest and potential collaboration.

Will there be private land in these Parks?

Essentially, no. Regional Parks will include Vacant Commissioner's Land. However, there are six exceptions:

Wolf Creek Park:

- 1) Trans-Canada has rights to the pipeline corridor, which crosses a section of Wolf Creek Park
- 2) White Pass and Yukon Railway owns the railway corridor which also crosses Wolf Creek Park
- 3) The Department of National Defense (DND) administers land, which includes the Cadet Camp, which extends to Wolf Creek. The Wolf Creek Park boundary includes the Creek and a land buffer on either side of the Creek and therefore overlaps DND land
- 4) Mistakenly, a small parcel of private land was included within the Wolf Creek Park boundary when it was drawn in 2010. Staff have met and are working with the owner. This parcel will be removed from Wolf Creek Park and existing access will continue

McIntyre Creek Park:

- 1) Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd. owns a small parcel of land north of the Alaska Highway, which includes the area surrounding McIntyre Creek. YECL will retain ownership of this land while allowing it to be used as parkland for the foreseeable future as part of McIntyre Creek Park
- 2) Yukon College was recently granted additional Vacant Commissioner's Land as part of the College's endowment lands, which also fall within McIntyre Creek Park

What about the Chadburn Lake Park Reserve?

In 1964, the Yukon Government made an application to the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources to place a Park Reserve on the Chadburn Lake area, to protect it as a valuable recreational area. In 1970, the Yukon Government passed an Order in Council (OIC)(C.O. 1970/304) to protect the Park Reserve to enact withdrawal from disposal of lands (i.e. selling of land).

As part of the 2010 OCP, Chadburn Lake Park was established to protect the highly valued recreation areas on the east side of the Yukon River. The OCP also proposed revisions to the current OIC. In February 2013, Council generally supported an approach of amending the OIC to match the Chadburn Lake Park boundary as shown in the OPC. Administration discussed this with Yukon Government Lands Branch and at that time they were supportive of the proposal.

Yukon Government Energy, Mines and Resources is now bringing forward a cabinet submission to cancel the 1970 OIC and rely instead on the City through its Municipal Act and OCP powers to manage the area. The existing Land Development Protocol Agreement between Yukon Government and the City and Municipal Act powers provide appropriate tools for the City to manage the lands.

City Roles:

Which Departments at the City are involved? Who is leading this project?

The Planning Services Department is leading the Regional Parks Plan process, in close collaboration with Outreach and Events (which leads trail planning). Other Departments on the internal Working Group include: Environmental Sustainability, Bylaw Services, and Parks and Trails (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 hired John Glynn-Morris, an independent contractor, as Project Manager. John worked for the City in 2013 and has a background in public engagement, park planning, and community development.

What happened to the Parks and Protected Areas Bylaw Re-write?

The Parks and Protected Areas Bylaw Re-Write will commence during the fall of 2014. The Re-Write was postponed until after the Regional Parks Plan is completed. The Regional Parks Plan will help guide the Parks and Protected Areas Bylaw Task Force resulting in a more efficient and consistent process.

What about ongoing trail planning in Regional Park areas?

The 2007 Trail Plan and the 2010 OCP guide all trail planning activities. Trail planning decisions made prior to the Regional Parks Plan development process will not be reviewed during the Regional Parks Plan process. This includes the recent [East Yukon River Trails](#) planning decisions.

Mineral Claims:

What about active claims in these park areas?

Active claims are located within Regional Park boundaries. Those who hold mineral claims in good standing within a Regional Park boundary have the legal right to exercise that mineral claim.

Isn't there a 5-year withdrawal from staking prohibition in the Municipality?

Yes. The Yukon Government placed a [staking prohibition](#) in July 2012 on 74% of the City's municipal boundary. The existing moratorium is due to expire in July 2017. Some of the Regional Park lands are outside the staking prohibition boundary.

The prohibition order does not affect pre-existing mineral claims that remain in good standing.

Is there a court case against the City involving mineral exploration in the Wolf Creek Park area?

Yes. The implications of the case are unclear as it has yet to be resolved by the courts.

Future Park Use:

Will the Regional Parks Plan change how I currently recreate in these park areas?

It is unlikely the Regional Parks Plan will change existing legal recreational-use in these areas.

Will scientific and educational endeavours be permitted?

Yes, so long as activities adhere to existing policies and regulations.

Can development occur within the Regional Parks?

Yes. The OCP stipulates that areas of Recreation Area Land Use Designation allow for and may encourage developments related to recreational pursuits (see section 18.3 (p.74) in the OCP).

The OCP identified Environmentally Sensitive Areas, many within Park boundaries. What does that mean for potential future park-related development?

The OCP stipulates in identified Environmentally Sensitive Areas, minimal disturbance, development, or human intervention will be permitted. In these areas the OCP stipulates that development can happen but needs consideration and may require mitigation efforts. Activities such as natural surface trails, interpretation and signage, research and education are permitted in these areas. Furthermore, the OCP stipulates that community enjoyment of these areas be encouraged.

Can I camp in Regional Parks?

Camping is prohibited in Regional Parks unless otherwise indicated.

Is sport fishing, hunting, and trapping permitted in Regional Parks?

Sport fishing with a valid license is allowed within the Municipal Boundary, including Regional Parks. Hunting and trapping are prohibited within the Municipal Boundary.

Are shared-use trails allowed in these Parks?

Yes. Trail planning and development in Regional Park areas takes direction from the 2007 Trail Plan, which informed the 2010 OCP. The OCP stipulates that:

- 18.1.1: Prioritization of Trail Plan implementation measures shall be considered in these Park areas.
- 18.5.1: Where feasible, consideration shall be made to separate multi-use trails (which accommodate motorized and non-motorized recreation) from non-motorized trails. Future multi-use trail development shall avoid environmentally sensitive areas wherever possible.

The Snowmobile, ATV, and Parks and Protected Areas Bylaws also dictate trail use.