

Report

City of Merritt
REGULAR Council Meeting
February 25, 2020

File Number: 6440

To: Scott Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer
From: Don McArthur, Planning Manager
Date: February 20, 2020
Subject: North Bench Lands Neighbourhood Development Plan – Phase 1

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council direct staff to contract a consultant or consultant team to prepare a neighbourhood development plan for submission to the Province with a Crown Land Tenure Application, in advance of finalization of the 2020-2024 Financial Plan Bylaw.

Executive Summary:

Development of the North Bench lands is identified in the current OCP as a priority for future growth of the community. At the December 12, 2019 Regular Council Meeting, Council directed staff to consult with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) regarding a potential Crown Land Tenure application for the Crown lands north of Mountain Drive and directed staff to prepare budgetary information regarding creation of a North Bench NDP to submit with the application.

Staff obtained three quotes, and working within budgetary constraints, have developed a plan to contract a consultant or consultant team to create a Phase 1 high level plan to meet the requirements of the Crown Land Tenure application. If the application is successful, a Phase 2 detailed plan would then be created to guide development of the lands.

Background:**North Bench Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The North Bench Lands are comprised of approximately 358 acres of Crown land, split between three parcels. The Official Community Plan indicates that the lower 100 acres of the North Bench Lands are suitable for residential development.

City staff have had preliminary discussions with FLNRORD's Crown Land Tenure division about the feasibility of making a new Crown Land Tenure application for the North Bench Lands, to utilize those lands for residential, public trail and recreation purposes, which could include a Disc Golf course. From these discussions, staff understands that the City is in a good position to make an application for these lands.

A land use plan is a requirement of a Crown Land Tenure application. However, based on conversations with the Ministry, City staff understand that the plan submitted with the application need only consider general settlement patterns and infrastructure requirements. The plan does not need to include detailed engineering or technical studies. In the event the application is successful, the City would then augment this high level plan with further technical analysis at a later date.

The budget for Phase 1 of the North Bench NDP would be \$50,000, including a 15% contingency.

Phase 2 of the plan would only be developed if the Crown Land Tenure application to obtain the North Bench lands is successful.

Options / discussion

1. THAT Council direct staff to contract a consultant or consultant team to prepare a neighbourhood development plan for submission to the Province with a Crown Land Tenure Application, in advance of finalization of the 2020-2024 Financial Plan Bylaw.
2. THAT Council request additional information before proceeding further.

Respectfully submitted,

Don McArthur
Planning and Development Services Manager