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January 30, 2025

Project/File: 115824088

Clyde MacGregor, Economic Development Officer
District of Fort St. James
477 Stuart Drive West
Fort St. James BC V0J1P0

Dear Clyde,

Reference: Spirit Square Park Feasibility Study

Stantec Consulting Ltd., (Stantec) is pleased to provide the District of Fort St. James (District) with this Feasibility Study for Spirit Square Park (the Park). This document is intended to provide District staff with an overview of a concept design for the Park, along with high-level project phasing and cost implications that can be used to inform future design and funding activities. Given the Park design is at concept level only, it is subject to further cost and design analysis as part of any future detailed design phase.

This document includes:

1. Design Vision & Approach for Spirit Square Park
2. Park Site Opportunities & Constraints
3. Preliminary Park Master Plan Design Used for Council and Public Engagement
4. Summary of Council and Public Engagement
5. Spirit Square Park Concept Design
6. Spirit Square Park Concept Design Feasibility Considerations

Appendix 1: District Staff Working Session – September 4, 2024

Appendix 2: Background Review

Appendix 3: Public and Council Engagement Boards

Should you have any questions about anything contained in this document, please contact the undersigned at your convenience.

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Reference: Spirit Square Park Feasibility Study

1. Design Vision & Approach for Spirit Square Park

The District is exploring opportunities to revitalize the downtown of Fort St. James by using Spirit Square Park as a catalyst for improved community gathering and well-being. The two District-owned lots, which comprise the Park, provide a unique opportunity to rethink an important community recreational and cultural space, while improving social connections in downtown.

The following design vision and principles were created to address the District's stated policy goals and objectives. They were developed following a working session with District staff on September 4, 2024, and following a detailed review of published District policy documents. The meeting minutes from the District Staff Working Session can be found in Appendix 1, while the detailed policy review is in Appendix 2.

1.1 Design Vision

A Community Hub and Catalyst for Downtown Revitalization.

1.2 Spirit Square Park Design Principles & Objectives

1. Create a user-centred design to improve safety, comfort and accessibility.

Promote a space where residents and visitors of all ages, abilities and backgrounds feel comfortable, safe and willing to participate.

2. Promote environmental sustainability with use of native plants, green infrastructure and minimum resource consumption.

Explore ideas for increasing biodiversity and habitat preservation including large trees, wetlands and wildlife corridors.

3. Improve circulation and connectivity.

Enable greater multi-modal connectivity to trails, parks, and key community nodes to facilitate greater park integration with neighbouring land uses and enable future lake access.

4. Revitalize character and form in the intersection of the Park, streetscape and downtown.

Create and promote a welcoming and vibrant neighbourhood, dedicate space for active transportation and a collision-free environment.

5. Develop Park recreation options (active and passive) that support community inclusion and social interaction.

Explore spaces to accommodate public art, festival space, farmers' markets, play, community gardens, picnic areas, walking loops and promenades that celebrate local culture and promote tourism.

6. Celebrate local culture, environment and community.

Champion the heritage, culture and people of Fort St. James.

1.3 Design Precedent Images



2. Park Site Opportunities & Constraints

The following summarizes identified opportunities and constraints impacting future Park design. Many of these have been addressed in the Park's concept design, while others will be explored further as part of any future detailed design process and subject to feasibility considerations.

2.1 Opportunities

- Create an inviting and safe experience in the Park with the use of CPTED principles including:
 - Increased usage and natural surveillance from park users, pedestrians, storefronts, and cars on the road.
 - Include additional lighting and minimize areas with hidden nooks for undesired activities in the Park.
 - Choose plants that don't block views and sightlines.
 - Create discernible spaces for access points within the Park.
- Create connections within the Park and to adjacent land uses that emphasize views, allow for access to Stuart Lake, improve human experience, and accommodate different park activities.
 - Create a safe crossing at the highway and Park intersection with the use of traffic calming strategies including an elevated crossing, chicane or special paint markings, signs and signal lights that will encourage traffic to slow down.
 - Explore the use of multi-use pathways and a central promenade spine between the highway and the lake for future slope stabilization works and public access to the lake. Allow for service and construction vehicles to access the site and lake.
 - Create a loop pathway within the Park that connects active and passive recreation activities and meanders through the natural habitat, leveraging important views over the lake.
 - Improve access to the site from adjacent properties.
 - Plan for future waterfront pathways and trail/connection (consider multi-use trails).
- Emphasize the local history and culture as part of the public art.
- Incorporate native and adaptable planting that is functional, low maintenance, and provides aesthetic enhancement to the Park. Select specific planting typologies that serve different areas like streetscape, pollinator gardens, park trees etc.
- Increase the number of parking spots (including accessible) and create a flexible space for turnaround and drop-off, food truck parking, farmers market etc.
- Provide site furnishings and amenities for public use and create rest areas along the Park loop. Create opportunities to sit in the shade and sun for better microclimate comfort.
- Provide opportunities to support multimodal access to the park.

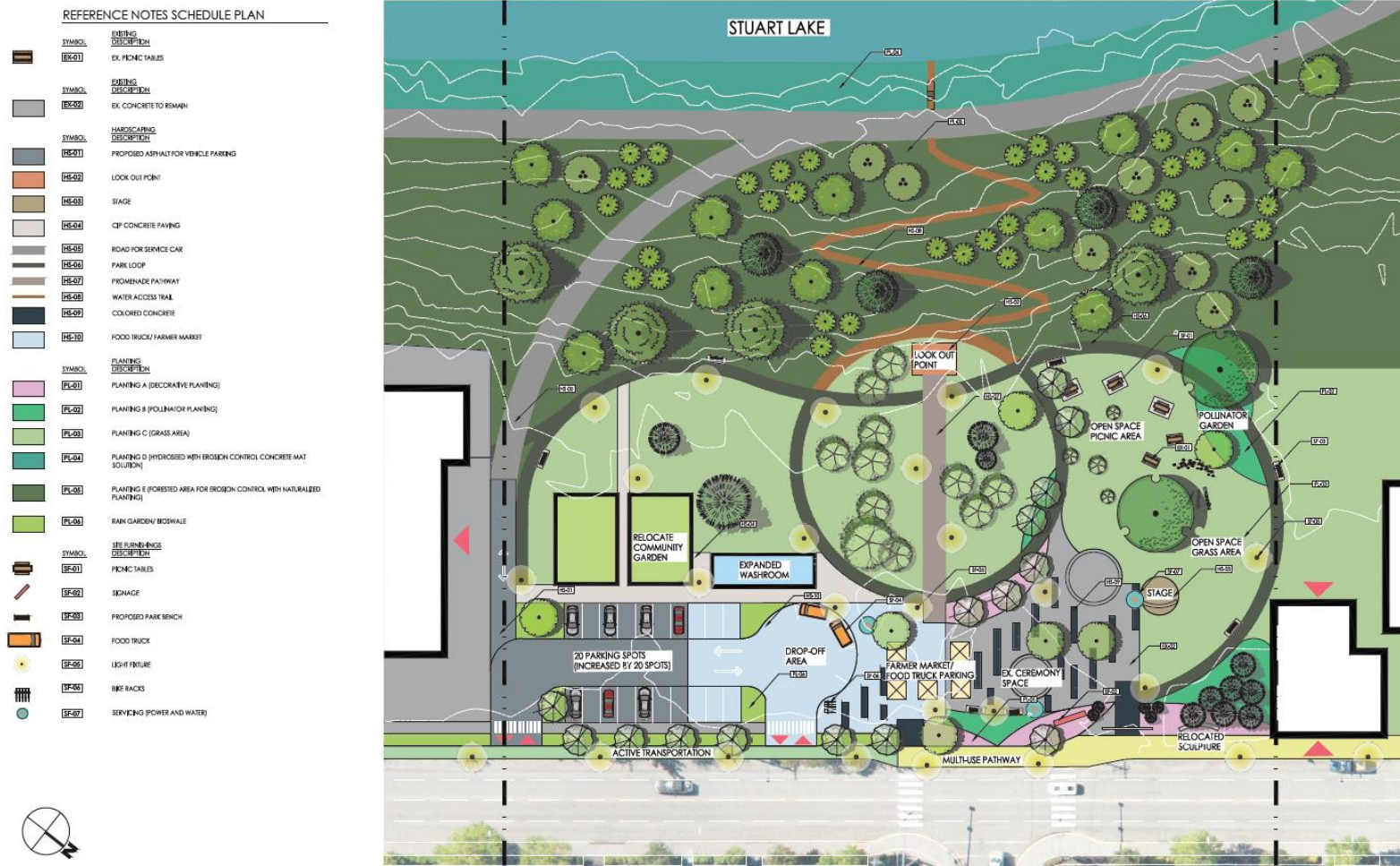
Reference: Spirit Square Park Feasibility Study

2.2 Constraints

- Unstable slopes limit access to the lake and make it unsafe for human use. Limited programming and use of slope until it has been stabilized / restored. Consider a chain link / safety fence set back from the slope, with the understanding that over time the slope failure may progress, fence may need to be re-located in the future.
- Narrow sidewalk, site property lines, and existing structures constrain future implementation of active transportation infrastructure.
- Potential impact to the local habitat and wildlife through clearing of large trees and vegetation to reinforce the slopes.
- Existing pathways are made of clear crush requiring additional maintenance and might be uncomfortable for wheelchair accessibility.
- Adjacent land development constraints impacting wider site integration and connectivity.

3. Preliminary Park Master Plan Design Used for Council and Public Engagement

The following preliminary park master plan for Spirit Square Park was presented at the public open house held in Fort St. James on October 16, 2024, and to the District's Council at a workshop on October 17, 2024. The feedback received is summarized in Section 4.



4. Summary of Council and Public Engagement

This section provides a summary of the key themes / topics discussed, and feedback received at both the Spirit Square Park Public Open House held in Fort St. James on October 16, 2024, and the District Council Workshop on October 17th, 2024.

4.1 Public Open House

- Open House Attendees: 28 attendees (including some councillors and an ex, councillor)
- Surveys completed: 9

4.1.1 Key Design Priorities

Members of the community highlighted the following as key priorities for the Park design:

- Safety
 - Many of the community members felt the Park is currently unsafe and uninviting. The general tone was that members wanted the Park to feel safe and inviting for all to come and enjoy.
- Decreased vagrancy
 - A reason for the poor safety perception of the Park is the current levels of vagrancy. Members of the community stated that for the Park to be fully enjoyed, this would need to be addressed.
- Focus on illumination and eyes-in-the-park
 - Community members shared that proper illumination would help with safety and allow for all-season use.

4.1.2 Describe Your Vision for Spirit Square Park

Members of the community were asked to describe their visions for Spirit Square Park using one word. The following was the most common responses received:

- “Inviting”
- “Safe”
- “Comfortable”
- “Inclusive”
- “Attractive”

4.1.3 Priority Changes

Members of the community highlighted the following desired changes to the current Park design:

- Maintain the cenotaph
- Protect the Pitka monument & time capsule
- Clearly label / define an area for holding ceremonies (Remembrance Day, moose hide, etc.)

Reference: Spirit Square Park Feasibility Study

4.1.4 Design Support

Members of the community spoke highly about the following aspects of the functional design concept:

- Community garden relocation
- Farmers market space and dedication
- Moving the food trucks off the main road and providing power/servicing
- Lights around the park
- A lookout area
- Four-season path that is maintained
- Park benches and sitting areas
- Off-street parking with accessible stalls
- A bathroom on site

4.1.5 Design Opportunities

The following is a list of future Park design opportunities community members would like considered:

- Additional bicycle parking
- First aid station at the bathrooms
- Community Garden improvements including:
 - Irrigation for garden
 - Shed for garden tools
 - Accessible access to the garden for those with mobility impairment (wheelchair users)
- School use space including:
 - Outdoor classroom area
 - Play area
 - Reading circle
- Partial stage coverage and improved seating for:
 - Moosehide
 - Small concerts
 - Remembrance Day
- Seasonal opportunities including:
 - Skating rink in the winter
 - Picnic areas in the summer
 - Expanded farmers market in the fall
- Fire pit (open & closed) with stumps/benches
- Winter-friendly washrooms
- First Nation ritual/land-based learning space
- Retention of existing shipping container on site to support future community design-based activities

Reference: Spirit Square Park Feasibility Study

4.1.6 Engagement Takeaways

The following is a summary of the main engagement takeaways from the public open house:

- There was overall positive support for Park improvements with a lot of feedback received addressing future opportunities.
- General support for the improved Park design and slope stability works, but comments raised including:
 - The high cost of slope stability works and whether that money could be better spent elsewhere.
 - Desire to understand how funding would be secured to support Park implementation.
- An overall lack of interest in shoreline access as many people enjoy access from Cottonwood Park. Many community members did mention a lake lookout area to be desirable.
- Focus on improved comfort in the Park. Many community members feel the park is unsafe and uninviting. A need was expressed to increase its safety through design.
- Focus on illumination, eyes-in-the-park, and increased usership to deter undesirable behaviour.
- Importance placed on maintaining the cenotaph and protecting the Pitka monument and time capsule.
- Focus on creating a space for the community to come together and connect. This includes improved capacity to accommodate farmers' market, food trucks, the community garden, and smaller festivals.
- Four season use was identified as a priority both in programming and materials used in the Park.
- Need to consult with First Nations to receive their input and incorporate their culture into the design.

4.2 Council Workshop

The following is a summary of some of the District Council's design priorities for the Park which were raised during the October 17 Council Workshop. These are in addition to discussions centred on slope stability:

- Support a planting plan that avoids the trees used in Cottonwood Park because they all died.
- Develop a new lighting plan is needed for the park.
- Maintain the cenotaph and Pitka monument & time capsule.
- Do not support fruit or berry trees in the planting plan because of the bears.
- Need to be able to accommodate truck parking and manoeuvrability on site (i.e. food trucks, farmers market vehicles).
- Dimensions needed on a future plan to understand the size of the parking lot.
- Consider changing the scope of park development to delete lake access; objective is to reduce cost / complexity by avoiding / reducing scope of work related to slope stabilization; consider a look out to enhance lake views, but otherwise avoid work related to the slope to the extent possible.

5. Spirit Square Park Concept Design

The following concept plan for Spirit Square Park addresses design objectives outlined earlier in this document and reflects pragmatic funding considerations. Any future detailed design would include a materials, landscaping, and programming plan.



5.1 Summary of Concept Plan Features

The following summarizes some of the features associated with the Park's concept design. Those listed would be expanded further as part of any future detailed design process.

Design Feature	Design Considerations
Onsite Car Park	- Onsite parking for 30 cars and includes accessible stalls. - Parking has bi-directional access and egress onto Stuart Lake Highway improving access to the Park. - Parking is conveniently located close to washrooms, the community garden, and flexible open space.
Drop-Off / Food Truck Area	- Drop-off area included adjacent to area of Park designed to accommodate festivals, markets, and other community events. - This drop-off area is also designed to support three food trucks. The location best supports community events.
Relocation of Community Garden	- A key design priority was to relocate the community garden from its current location to the Park. - The concept design allocates a large area sufficient to accommodate the existing Community Garden and also capacity to grow. Its proposed location close to the parking area provides convenient community access.
Improved / Relocated Washrooms	Design includes new and expanded washrooms to support Park user comfort. The location close to the community garden and parking area increases visibility and surveillance.
Improved Park Circulation	New and improved pathway connection around and through the site. This includes a direct pathway connecting the parking area to the proposed Stuart Lake look out area. This supports enhanced park connectivity and ease of access.
Enhanced Landscaping	Includes opportunities for enhanced landscaping to support greater park design coherence. A landscaping plan would be provided at any future detailed design stage.
Programming Flexible Space	Design provides an area of unprogrammed space. This provides flexibility to include more specific recreational / cultural programming needs as part of a future detailed design.
Retention of Existing Community Gathering Area	- The existing area of the Park near the cenotaph has been retained to support cost viability. The location of the future food truck area supports greater activation of this space. - The cenotaph and existing sculpture would likely need to be relocated elsewhere in the Park to accommodate the concept design. The exact location would be subject to community consultation at the detailed design stage.
Chain Link / Safety Fencing	Fencing set back from the top of slope to separate public from the top of the failing slope.
Stuart Lake Look-Out Area	New Stuart Lake look-out area that creates a better visual connection between the Park and the lake. This is subject to geotechnical slope stability considerations which affect cost

Reference: Spirit Square Park Feasibility Study

6. Spirit Square Park Concept Design Feasibility Considerations

The following summarizes the high-level project phasing and costing considerations for implementation of the Park's concept design shown in Section 5. The project phasing considers design priorities, funding, constructability and ongoing community usership during build-out stages. The project costings are high-level orders of magnitude and require more detailed analysis. They have been provided to enable staff to explore funding opportunities. They are all subject to timing, design and market changes.

6.1 Project Phasing

Project Phase	Timeline	Key Considerations
1. Relocation and Development of the Community Garden	6 months	Landscape, Civil: Considerations focused on servicing, fencing and easy access.
2. Promenade Pathway	6 months	Landscape, Civil: Completing a scenic pathway with additional trees for enhanced human-experience.
3. Sidewalks	6 months	Civil, Landscape: Broom finish concrete sidewalks around parking and near community garden.
4. Drop-off Area/ Food truck area	6 months	Civil, Landscape: Drop-off area is dedicated for food trucks during public events.
5. Parking	6-12 months	Civil, Landscape: Additional parking to support park uses.
6. Look out point	12-24 months	Geotechnical, Hydrotechnical, Civil, Landscape, additional capital funding likely required to complete this work.
7. Expand Washroom Facilities	12-24 months	Architecture, Landscape, Civil: additional capital funding potentially required to complete this work.

6.2 Preliminary Order of Magnitude Costs

Design Features	Order of Magnitude
1. Look out point	High
2. Relocation and Development of the Community Garden	Low
3. Promenade Pathway	Medium
4. Sidewalks	Medium
5. Drop-off Area	Low
6. Parking	Medium
7. Expand Washroom Facilities	Medium

Legend:

Low: \$0 - \$250k / Medium: \$100k - \$0.5m / High: \$1m – \$2m

Reference: Spirit Square Park Feasibility Study

6.3 Other Feasibility Considerations

Other key feasibility considerations for Spirit Square Park include:

1. Safety and Accessibility:

- Addressing unstable slopes with geotechnical design / construction infrastructure may not be practical due to cost implications (\$2-3 million) and constructability issues. Options may include installing a fence that is set back a distance from the top of the slope, understanding that over time, the fence may need to be relocated due to longer term / continued retrogression of the slope failure. Look-out platform could potentially be installed on driven piles. This does, however, risk being an expensive cost, depending on the size / complexity of platform desired.
- Enhance pathways, lighting, and visibility to make the park safe, inclusive, and accessible for all users.

2. Cost, Phasing, and Funding:

- Prioritize low-cost, impactful projects (e.g., community garden relocation, sod / grass, food truck area, chain link safety, fence <\$250,000) to show immediate progress.
- Secure external funding through grants, partnerships, or community fundraising to cover higher-cost phases like asphalt parking lots, sidewalks, look out platform and / or expanded washrooms.
- Align project phasing with funding availability and user demand, starting with safety and accessibility improvements.

3. Community and Cultural Needs:

- Retain and protect cultural landmarks like the cenotaph, Pitka monument, and time capsule while consulting with First Nations to integrate their culture meaningfully.
- Focus on creating a welcoming, inclusive space for diverse activities like festivals, farmers' markets, and educational programs.

4. Environmental Sustainability:

- Use native, low-maintenance planting to promote biodiversity, reduce maintenance costs
- Incorporate green infrastructure to manage resource consumption sustainably.

5. Connectivity and Flexibility:

- Improve multi-modal connections to trails, surrounding areas, and future lake access.
- Design flexible spaces that can adapt to evolving community needs, ensuring long-term relevance and usability.
- By focusing on safety, phased funding, cultural integration, sustainability, and connectivity, the Park can deliver impactful improvements while managing financial and community expectations.



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Appendix 1: District Staff Working Session – September 4, 2024

Preliminary Design Discussion Package – District of Fort St. James

Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Date: September 4 2024: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Attendees: Rachelle Willick, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Fort St. James
 Alex Bihori, Corporate Officer, District of Fort St. James
 Doug Lowther, Director of Operations, District of Fort St. James
 Clyde MacGregor, Economic Development Officer, District of Fort St. James
 Maciej Golaszewski, Associate, Landscape Architect and Urban Designer, Stantec
 Andrew Norton, Associate, Senior Urban Planner, Stantec
 Scott Wilson, Junior Planner, Stantec

Time	Item	Action
5 minutes	Meeting Objectives	Outline meeting objectives and the intent of the workshop
	Following everyone's introduction on the call, Andrew Norton provided an overview of the intent and objectives of the meeting. Andrew highlighted that the meeting intends to facilitate open discussions between the District of Fort St. James (staff) and Stantec to confirm the park's priorities, review on-site opportunities and constraints, discuss key programming and phasing, and coordinate the design's scope.	No Actions
10 minutes	Project Status	Overview of project tasks completed to date
	Andrew Norton provided a breakdown of the works completed to date, highlighting the following items: Background Review, Communication and Engagement Plan, and the Design Review Discussion Package, which includes the following priority and design framework items, Design Approach & Vision, Site Opportunities & Constraints Functional Diagram, and Functional Diagram. When asked if staff had any questions regarding the work completed, Rachelle and Clyde brought forward that the District has recently encountered a grant funding opportunity (the Green Municipal Fund Growing Canada's Community Canopies fund) to stabilize the slope and replant Spruit Square Park. They requested support from Stantec in the completion of the funding application, specifically, assistance with the completion of a Planting Plan which required either an arborist or landscape architect. An Archaeological study was previously completed.	FSJ – send grant application to Stantec for review

Time	Item	Action
90 minutes	Design Review	Facilitate review and discussion using the Preliminary Design Discussion Package
	Maciej Golaszewski provided an in-depth overview of the design works completed and detailed the design process and principles which led to the design approach. Maciej's overview included an extensive breakdown of the three design items, Design Approach & Vision, Site Opportunities & Constraints Functional Diagram, and Functional Diagram. Following the presentation, the Stantec team posed design questions to staff to facilitate feedback. The questions and responses are listed below: 1. What are the key site opportunities/constraints which the Park needs to consider now and, in the future? a. Parking on-site is a key priority i. 10 -15 parking stalls for event vendors and the farmers' market. Including accessible parking spaces. b. Though parking on site is a priority, there is parking available on the street and adjacent parking lots for overflow. 2. What is the use of the small "office building" a. Currently used for a hairdresser (leased). The building is in poor condition and is not a major priority to the District, other than being a revenue generator. i. Stantec: "There is an opportunity if we were to remove the office building to give space for active transportation and greater frontage development". 3. What is the status of the existing washrooms on site and are they to be kept? a. Washrooms are a constant pain; act as an area for vagrancy and are difficult to clean. Their placement is a poor location, taking up a prime area. b. That said, the washrooms are important, a lot of people use them during events and the farmer's market. Therefore, if they were to be removed for the redesign, they would need to be replaced temporarily until a permanent option is available. c. Current funding would allow us to do the landscaping, but don't have a lot of funding for new structures (including washrooms).	No Actions

Time	Item	Action
	4. How do you define landscaping a. Green municipal funding allows for trees and shrubs (ie. Soft scaping). Does not include hardscaping i. Stantec: "What about the pathway/promenade construction?" 1. Only if it was labelled as a need for maintaining the planting. 5. What should the final design deliverable detail? a. A Planting and Soft-Scaping Plan i. Current funding supports planting and soft-scaping work. b. A Design (phasing) Plan i. A design which outlines future programming (hardscaping) to be developed as a phased approach once funding gets approved. c. Priority Phasing i. List which site work is to be completed first, second, third etc., to meet programming priorities and avoid inefficiencies or future park disruptions 1. E.g., priority to complete the Slope Stabilization works before major site redesign work as the heavy machine movement may disrupt the site but is also needed to secure additional areas for later programming. 6. Would the Community Garden be fully relocated to the Park? a. The garden should be fully relocated to the Park i. Best to rebuild the garden with a better design rather than move existing structures to Spirit Square Park. b. The current community garden is not utilized fully; therefore, the new area could be small and better planned. 7. What materials would you prefer for the pathways? a. Would not be interested in a woodchip pathway b. Would want paving, asphalt, stone, rubber, etc. due to accessibility and issues with snow removal i. A hard surface would be more desirable for maintenance 8. What does staff see as a priority for addressing the edges of the site? a. Commercial lands to the right, leave as hard edge	

Time	Item	Action
	b. Desire soft edge to the left where there is the existing daycare i. Want to encourage open use and access of the Park from the daycare. ii. Want to create an area for future use associated with the daycare (i.e. play area), but not considered in the current design. 1. Prioritize maintaining open space adjacent to the daycare for future programming 9. Priority around sculpture relocation, access points to the Park (arch), and use of the stage? a. Less a stage, more a cobbled area that is a dedicated space for gatherings and presentations. i. Desire to have Spirit Square Park support the commercial downtown area. ii. Stantec: “Could a viewpoint platform achieve both the objectives of a viewpoint and a gathering place?” 1. Yes – we like that. b. Sculpture can be moved/removed, but we should pose that to the public through engagement. c. Arch can be moved/removed, but we should pose that to the public through engagement. 10. Farmers Market space allocation and need? What do you envision the number of food trucks and space for the future Farmers Market? a. Currently have 1-3 trucks but would like to provide for 5-9 food vendors (a mix of trucks and tents). b. Desire to have power points for food trucks to remove generators at the Market. 11. What level of detail is needed for the final concept plan? are there key items needed for investors? a. Require a broad overview map, i. Slope stabilization ii. Farmers market iii. Community garden iv. Entryway b. “Accessibility, reconciliation, active transportation, habitat restoration, native planting” are important language to include to align with the funding application/priorities i. Habitat restoration is very important ii. Native plants for reconciliation	

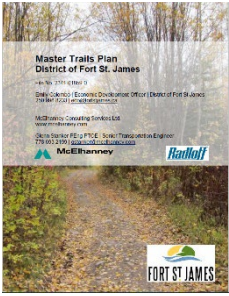
Time	Item	Action
	12. Explain the funding breakdown for the Park. a. 50% funding coverage for the Park and the Slope stabilization. b. 50% funding: i. Undertake the work required to create a green space in the community. ii. 5,000 refunded for work to prepare the plan. iii. Includes stabilizing the slope for planting that will stand the test of time. 13. Outline the Park Priorities: a. Develop a new community garden (Immediate need). b. Move Farmers Market and food trucks to the site. c. Crime prevention is a core item. i. Mindful of creating gathering and rest areas without creating loitering areas. ii. Large bushes are used for stashing liquor and hiding behind. iii. Open site lines for crime prevention. iv. A busier park will reduce crime. d. Pathway to the lake. e. Viewpoint to the lake (like the existing space). f. Walkways through the Park. g. Future active transportation connections.	
10 minutes	Communication and Engagement Plan	Introduction to the Communication and Engagement Plan
	Scott Wilson provided an overview of the engagement plan and discussed the upcoming schedule.	FSJ: to review the engagement plan, schedule, and comment on the engagement questions. Stantec: arrange a meeting with staff to review the Communication and Engagement Plan and discuss preparation for the public open house and Council meeting.
5 minutes	Next steps & Milestones	Review work plan and schedule, and confirm project milestones
	Andrew Norton discussed the next steps and scheduling. This included: 1. Draft concept plan by the end of September. 2. Upcoming Comms and Engagement Plan meeting with staff to review/discuss:	FSJ – send Stantec a draft letter template for First Nation's outreach

Time	Item	Action
	a. Advertisement strategy. b. Finalize engagement questions. c. Coordinate engagement materials and share branding. 3. Creation of a project letter to be sent to the First Nations, outlining the project and availability to meet on October 17th in person to discuss. a. Staff to send Stantec with a District template. b. Stantec to support in the creation of the letter.	



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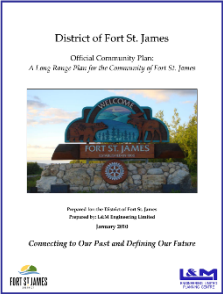
Appendix 2: Policy Background Review

Policy Document	Year	Policy Summary	Design Implications
 Master Trails Plan District of Fort St. James Master Trails Plan District of Fort St. James	2013	Revitalize the waterfront pathway extension to Spirit Square as a means of generating tourism and connecting the National Historic Site to the town	- Design should plan for future waterfront pathway and trail/connection (consider multi-use trails) - Design should be a future-proof site to enable greater park intergradation with neighbouring land used for future access to the lake
		- Promote an attractive, accessible and integrated trail system to facilitate: - Improve the quality of life for residents - Strategically establishing trail connections to key education, employment and retail destinations, trails can serve commuter and shopping trips - Reduce community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions - A meaningful shift to active transportation modes depends on road users recognizing safe and convenient alternatives to driving. - Create opportunities for outdoor recreation-based tourism - Connect to regional recreational trail networks (e.g. bike parks, motorsport trails, cross-country ski trails, etc.) and local attractions (e.g. the Fort St James National Historic Site, Ripples of the Past Interpretive Trail, etc)	- Design should create an attractive, safe, and accessible park - Design should support a vibrant, inclusive, and barrier-free space for all residents - Design should focus on park safety and utilize crime prevention approaches (CPTED) - Design should promote walkability and cycling in a safe and accessible manner - Design should integrate with future bike and walking infrastructure - Design should market the square as a strong tourist destination with economic opportunities (leverage the farmers market and local festivals)
		Spirit Square has the potential to be a major destination for walking and cycling	- Design should be able to accommodate access for cyclists (at a minimum, allow for parking) and pedestrian traffic - Design should integrate with future bike and walking infrastructure
		Convenient and secure bicycle parking should be available for all public and private developments in the City	Design should provide bicycle parking to support community cycling and future downtown bike infrastructure



		Planning guidelines which encourage the linkage of community destinations, encourage community connections and promote active and passive recreational opportunities	- Design should promote community activities (leverage community garden) to promote passive recreational opportunities - Design should enable the ability to gather on site (sufficient vehicle and bicycling parking, seating/gathering areas) to encourage community connection - Design should plan for future waterfront pathway and trail/connection (consider multi-use trails) - Design should integrate open space with seating and support varied community activities - Design should enable a greater connection to trails, parks, and key community nodes through multi-modal connectivity
		Design guidelines which promote safe and agreeable trails which integrate the needs of different users	Design should focus on walking trails which are safe, accessible to a range of users (mobility and mode), and usable in all four seasons
		Park design guidelines which promote safety, surveillance, visibility, and illumination	- Design should focus on park safety and utilize crime prevention approaches (CPTED) - Design should encourage “eyes on the street” passive surveillance - Design should avoid the creation of dark and hidden areas - Design should provide appropriate levels of lighting and sightlines throughout the park
		The proposed amenities for the trail system in Fort St James should support and enhance the brand of the Town: “Fort St James, a historic place with a resourceful future”	Design should consider the District of Fort St. James “Trail Place” branding: “<i>Fort St James, a historic place with a resourceful future</i>” for trail signage
		8.2.1 Sidewalks	
		Sidewalks should be at least 1.5 metres wide, but desirably 1.8 m for unobstructed pedestrian traffic in opposing directions. When the inside of the sidewalk abuts a wall or other vertical face, an extra 0.5 meters of width should be provided for the safety and comfort of pedestrians. In areas of heavy pedestrian traffic (e.g. Downtown), a width of 2.5 – 3.0 m is preferred	- Design should try to achieve a minimum 1.8 m sidewalk as a design standard - Design should plan for potential future multi-use trail along Stuart Lake Hwy - Design should align with potential future sidewalk alterations and expansions along Stuart Lake Hwy



		On major roads (e.g. Stuart Lake Hwy), sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the road	
		8.2.2 Shared Bike Lane	
		Shared lanes should be between 4.0 and 5.0 meters wide, measured between the road centreline and the road edge. Where this width exceeds 4.5 metres, consideration should be given to creating formal bicycle lanes or paved shoulders	Design should consider the potential for a minimum 5 m shared car/bicycle lane along Stuart Lake Hwy
		8.2.4 Multi-Use Trails	
		- Trail widths should be a minimum of 3.0 m, especially in areas with heavy pedestrian traffic. Additional width should be provided in pathway curves with radii less than 32m - The trail alignment should be safe for cycling, incorporating sufficient sight distance for stopping and maneuvering	- Design should consider future connections to multi-use recreational trails which may have a minimum of 3 m width - Trails should have sufficient sight lines and distance for cyclists to stop and maneuver
	2010	8.3.2 Stairways	
		- Stairways should include a bike ramp so trail users can wheel their bike beside them. The ramp should be designed to prevent bicycle handlebars from catching in the handrail - A series of short flights of 14 steps or less, with landings in between, is preferable to a single long flight. 3. Steps should be of firm, non-slip materials with a maximum rise of 150mm and maximum tread of 280mm.	Design should try to achieve stairs with a series of short flights of 14 steps or less, with a landing in between, with a bike ramp
		Relevant Community Goals/Priority Projects to Achieve Community Vision	
		Development of trails: walking trails, historic information, boardwalk at Sowchea Swamp, recreational trails for hikers and bikers, self-guided walking path, etc	- Design should plan for future waterfront pathway and trail/connection (consider multi-use trails) - Design should incorporate a walking trail on site - Design should integrate with future bike and walking infrastructure
		Market Fort St. James to the outside world	- Design should support wider downtown revitalization through unifying design standards - Design should market the square as a strong tourist destination with economic opportunities (leverage the farmers market and festivals)

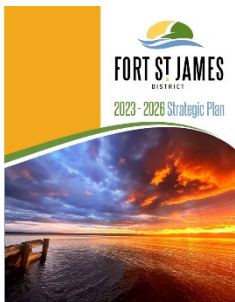


District of Fort St. James – Official Community Plan	Eco-tourism/tourism promotion in general	Design should market the square as a strong tourist destination with economic opportunities (leverage the farmers market and festivals)
	Relevant Guiding Principles	
	Working with the neighbouring Nak’azdli Band community south of the District	Design should incorporate inspiration from the Nak’azdli Whut’en First Nation (colours, materials, traditional learning area, imagery, wayfinding, etc.)
	Strong commercial and tourism areas with diversified economic and investment opportunities	Design should market the square as a strong tourist destination with economic opportunities (leverage the farmers market and festivals)
	Relevant Quality of Life Objectives	
	To conserve and protect natural environmental features and special places in the community	Design should seek to protect and enhance the natural features of Fort St. James
	To seek to enhance viewscales and open space	- Design should seek to create viewscales (consider Lake Stuart) and enhanced open space - Design should promote community activities (leverage community garden) and the ability to gather on site (sufficient vehicle and bicycling parking, seating/gathering areas)
	To encourage the protection and preservation of the historical character of the Plan area	Design should leverage local heritage character and take inspiration from the National Historic Site
	To provide a safe place for residents to live and visitors to experience	- Design should align with creating an attractive, safe, and accessible park - Design should focus on park safety and utilize crime prevention approaches (CPTED)
	Relevant Transportation Policies	
	To encourage accessibility and inclusion for all residents to places in the District, such as commercial stores and recreation spaces	- Design should meet current accessibility standards - Design should include programming, activities, and uses that consider the inclusion of all residents (age, accessibility, culture, etc.)

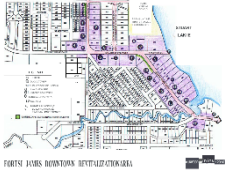


		To promote a healthy community by providing infrastructure for walking and cycling	Design should promote walkability and cycling in a safe and accessible manner
		To recognize the significance of bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and to plan for the future development of bicycle and pedestrian paths	- Design should integrate with future bike and walking infrastructure - Design should provide bicycling parking to support community cycling and future downtown bike infrastructure
		Relevant Parks, Recreation & Culture Objectives	
		Develop a park and greenbelt system and to provide community recreation facilities and programs, in the locations required, to meet the recreation needs of all residents of the community, as well as the needs of tourists	Design should promote community activities (leverage community garden) and the ability to gather on site (sufficient vehicle and bicycling parking, seating/gathering areas)
		Link parks and greenbelts through pedestrian and trail infrastructure	- Design should promote walkability and cycling - Design should integrate with future bike and walking infrastructure
		Provide opportunities for all residents to participate in recreation and cultural activities	Design should allow for varied activities (cultural and otherwise) and festivals to take place on-site
		Encourage the development of park and recreation facilities which will enhance the District's reputation as a major tourist destination	Design should market the square as a strong tourist destination with economic opportunities (leverage the farmers market and festivals)
		Relevant Parks, Recreation & Culture Policies	
		Maintain and develop parks safely by utilizing Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles	Design should focus on park safety and utilize crime prevention approaches (CPTED)
		Continue to encourage the development of a variety of beneficial cultural activities by responsible groups, service clubs and individuals	Design should allow for varied activities (cultural and otherwise) and festivals to take place on-site
		Support and foster opportunities that will enhance the community's creativity, culture and arts	Design should provide opportunities for integrating interactive heritage and cultural features such as sculptures, local art, interpretive plaques, important animals, etc.
		Relevant Commercial Objective	



		- Encourage the development of Fort St. James as a tourist destination and to support tourist commercial and highway commercial developments - Improve access to the Commercial Core through various modes of transportation including walking, cycling, automobile and others - Continue to improve the pedestrian environment in the Commercial Core	- Design should market the square as a strong tourist destination with economic opportunities (leverage the farmers market and festivals) - Design should integrate with future bike and walking infrastructure - Design should be able to accommodate access for cyclists (at a minimum, allow for parking) and pedestrian traffic - Design should promote walkability and cycling - Design should provide bicycling parking to support community cycling and future downtown bike infrastructure
 Fort St. James District 2023-2026 Strategic Plan	2023	Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation To explore and advance opportunities to work together with Indigenous governments on mutual goals and priorities for the benefit of our respective communities	Design should incorporate inspiration from the Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation (colours, materials, traditional learning area, imagery, wayfinding, etc.)
 Bulkley-Nechako Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee	2024	- Ensure recreation infrastructure is designed or upgraded for accessibility - A need to address: - Insufficient accessibility in a public washroom - Poor condition of sidewalks - Insufficient quality and accessibility of public seating (benches	- Design should meet accessibility standards - Design should address existing community accessibility concerns of poor signage, lack of accessible parking, lack of accessible public washrooms, unmaintained and non-four-season paths, difficulty accessing parks, and lack of accessible public parking and seating

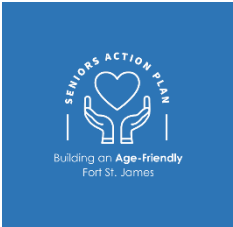


Bulkley Nechako Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee			
 Fort St. James  2021- 2026 Fort St. James Tourism Strategy	2021	- Fort St. James enhances its ability to attract target markets and increase length-of-stay and repeat visitation - Increase the number of visitors from the touring market (Hwy 16) (spring/summer/fall) - Fort St. James is a welcoming community with an attractive downtown core that appeals to residents and visitors - Improve the quality and appearance of the downtown core. - The Farmers' Market is recognized as a core tourist attraction - Increase access and viewpoints to Stuart Lake - Spirit Square Park is recognized as a centralized Urban park which has tourism potential	- Design should market the square as a strong tourist destination with economic opportunities (leverage the farmers market and festivals) - Design should promote and enhance the Farmers' Market - Design should align with creating an attractive, safe, and accessible park - Design should support wider downtown revitalization through unifying design standards - Design should promote and enhance the Farmers' Market - Design should create a viewpoint of Stuart Lake - Design should plan for future access to Stuart Lake - Design should be a future-proof site to enable greater park integration with neighbouring land used for future access to the lake - Design should market the square as a strong tourist destination with economic opportunities (leverage the farmers market and festivals)
 Fort St. James Downtown Revitalization Program	2010	Façade Enhancement Program - Design approach that blends 'TRADITIONAL' stylistic detailing (to capitalize positive 'heritage' feelings) while also conceptualizing facades that attempt to promote CONTEMPORARY Post & Beam styling and the CREATIVE USE of local forestry-based materials. The primary underlying design premise is to inject 'ARTFULNESS' into the architecture Landscaping Concept Design - Wooden edges are proposed to define planting beds and provide protection from vehicles and pedestrian traffic, to facilitate	- Design should integrate the District's façade and building design standards when proposing structures within the Park; especially if buildings front onto Stuart Lake Hwy - Design inspiration should integrate wood and local timber - Design should use wood and local timber for material use and planters



		maintenance and permit more flexibility in dealing with grade changes	
		Timber edges and low walls will define the extent of soil amendment or replacement, a critical component of a successful planting strategy	- Design inspiration should integrate wood and local timber - Design should use wood and local timber for material use and planters
		The proposed edge treatment is also intended to contribute to the distinctive character of the streetscape, tying the segments of the improved streetscape together and reinforcing the other proposed wooden elements (such as picket fences and archways) into a visually unified whole	- Design inspiration should integrate wood and local timber - Design should use wood and local timber for material use and planters
		The use of wood as the primary building material for the streetscape is in keeping with the area's roots in forestry and wood-related industries.	- Design inspiration should integrate wood and local timber - Design should use wood and local timber for material use and planters
		Timber-edged beds could be created at the bases of signposts as well as utility poles and along the ends of blank end walls of commercial buildings. A similar plant palette is recommended for private plantings as for public areas	- Design inspiration should integrate wood and local timber - Design should use wood and local timber for material use and planters
		Plantings should be concentrated at nodes and key points where they will be most visible, using native plants	- Design should focus on landscaping and plant materials along visible nodes where there is high movement - Design should utilize the District's native plant list
		- Landscaping with plant materials will focus on the following locations: - in the strips between the public sidewalks and parking lots - in landscaped traffic islands at entry signage sites - at the bases of utility poles - along sides of commercial buildings - at entry sign sites (locations to be determined)	Design should focus on landscaping and plant materials in key areas, such as strips between the public sidewalks and parking lots, at the base of utility poles, and entry sign sites
		Marketing & Advertisement Strategy	
		Design based on a historical approach, combining the use of timber, clear signage, FSJ logo, and planter beds	Design should strongly represent the brand of Fort St. James and seek to use timber as a design material



		A “sense of the past” is a core aspect of how Fort St. James defines itself	- Design should consider heritage features such as sculptures, interpretive plaques, important animals, etc., to promote the history of Fort St. James - Design should leverage local heritage character and take inspiration from the National Historic Site
		To provide a ‘sense of the past’ heritage interpretive features (sculptures, interpretive plaques, historical personalities, fur animals) may be developed that ‘re-create’ an impression of the past for visitors who are unfamiliar with local lore. These are desired to create “photo-ops” to promote interaction and tourism advertisement	Design should consider heritage features such as sculptures, interpretive plaques, important animals, etc., to promote the history of Fort St. James
 Senior Action Plan: Building an Age-Friendly Fort St. James	2021	Need for accessible outdoor recreation options for seniors to keep active, especially in the winter	Design should include an accessible walking path (consider a walking loop) as a shared activity
		Lack of accessible walking areas or lake access impedes those who are not physically able	- Design should include an accessible walking loop as a senior's activity - Design should consider future access to the lake
		No accessible outdoor walking routes, lake access or indoor walking options.	- Design should include an accessible walking loop as a senior's activity - Design should consider future access to the lake
		Poor sidewalk conditions are a major concern to accessibility and the ease of movement for an aging population	- Design should meet current accessibility standards - Design should consider surface material which promotes accessibility and ease of movement
		Public washrooms are closed in the winter and most benches do not have armrests	Design should accommodate year-round washroom facilities
		Relevant Short-Term Actions	
		Develop a design for an outside accessible walking loop with supporting amenities (i.e., outdoor exercise equipment, benches, picnic tables, lighting, grit boxes) that receives regular snow clearing. Possible locations include Goodwin Park, Cottonwood Park, around the new hospital and future housing projects. The project could be constructed in two phases. Phase 1) Walking loop & supporting amenities; Phase 2)	- Design should include an accessible walking loop as a senior's activity - Install amenities (such as benches, picnic tables, etc) to support senior rest areas and inclusive communal gathering places



		• Install accessible benches (at approx. 200 m intervals) & some accessible picnic tables to meet access standards and accommodate persons with a broader range of physical abilities. Prioritize installation at strategic community locations (downtown, parks, library, lakefront)	• Park benches should be approximately placed in 200m intervals to accommodate senior mobility
		• Design play areas to include seating & shelters that allow older people to supervise or enjoy watching	• Install amenities (such as benches, picnic tables, etc) to support senior rest areas and inclusive communal gathering places





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Appendix 3: Public and Council Engagement Boards

Spirit Park in the Neighbourhood Context



Acknowledgment:

The District of Fort St. James and the Design Team would like to acknowledge the unceded and ancestral territory of the Nak'azdli Whut'en people, who have occupied these lands since time immemorial. Our team remains committed to listening and learning from the Indigenous communities, recognizing the deep and complex connections they have with these lands.

Introduction:

With funding from the BC Active Transportation Fund, the District of Fort St. James is embarking on an exciting revitalization of Spirit Square Park. This masterplan aims to create a vision that balances environmental stewardship, socio-cultural enrichment, and

economic vitality. The goal is to transform Spirit Square Park into a welcoming and dynamic space that reflects the essence of the community while supporting the growth and vibrancy of the downtown area.

This revitalization initiative will include active engagement with Council, the community, local businesses, and First Nations to build a shared vision for Spirit Square Park. Through this collaboration, we aim to create a park that not only enhances public life and strengthens social connections but also fosters a deeper connection to the cultural heritage of the area.

The Vision for Spirit Park:

Envision a reimagined Spirit Square Park – a vibrant hub that integrates natural beauty, cultural richness, and community life. Located along the stunning Stuart

Lake shoreline, this expanded park will offer diverse spaces for both active and passive recreation, inviting residents and visitors of all ages and abilities to gather, relax, and engage in a variety of activities.

The new masterplan design emphasizes a user-centered approach, focusing on safety, comfort, and accessibility. Picture strolling along a central promenade or the open space loop that leads to a scenic lake lookout, where public markets, food trucks, and flexible seating areas create a lively atmosphere for social interactions. Resting spaces with benches and picnic areas will invite people to pause and enjoy the natural surroundings, while access points to the lake and shoreline rehabilitation will strengthen the park's connection to the water.



Design Approach: Site Analysis & Functional Diagram



Design Approach and Features:

1. Creating Spaces for Community Gathering and Celebration

- Flexible open spaces designed for public events, markets, and food vendors.
- Cozy seating areas, picnic spots, and a large stage for community performances.
- Open spaces that celebrate the local culture through art installations and educational elements.

2. Sustainability and Environmental Resilience

- Planting strategies focused on native and adaptive species to support local biodiversity.
- Enhanced green infrastructure to manage stormwater and improve ecological health.
- Large specimen trees that create shade and comfortable microclimates during summer.

3. Seamless Circulation and Connectivity

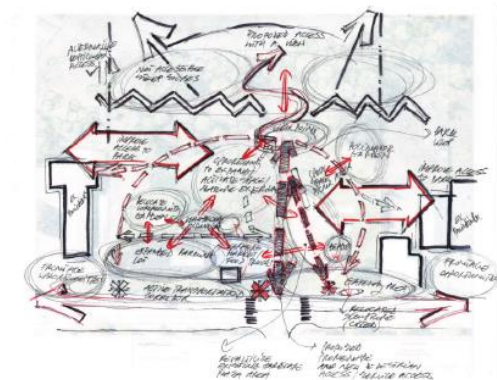
- Well-defined pathways and walking loops for year-round use, integrating seamlessly with neighboring trails and parks.
- Safe pedestrian crossings and accessible routes that promote multi-modal connectivity throughout the park and into downtown.
- Enhanced parking facilities and a clear drop-off area for convenience.

4. Integration with the Downtown Character

- Revitalized streetscape elements that blend the park with the surrounding urban landscape.
- Spaces designed to support active transportation, with dedicated lanes for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Improved sightlines and welcoming gateways that create a safe and vibrant entrance into the heart of Fort St. James.

5. Active and Passive Recreation Opportunities

- Diverse recreation options, including walking trails, community gardens, lakeshore access, and informal play areas.
- Passive spaces featuring pollinator gardens, picnic areas, and educational programming focused on local flora and fauna.



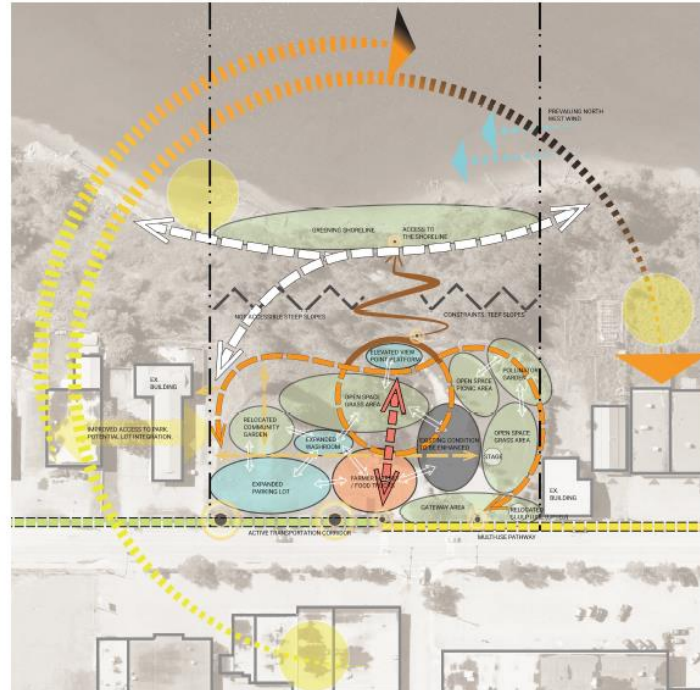
- A stage area designed to host events that celebrate the arts, culture, and heritage of Fort St. James and its First Nations.

Celebrating Culture, Nature, and Community:

Spirit Square Park is more than just a green space; it's a symbol of Fort St. James' commitment to creating a community that values culture, the environment, and the connections between people. Through thoughtful design, the park will serve as a cultural landmark that honors the traditions of the Nak'azdli Whut'en people while offering new opportunities for gathering, learning, and celebration.

This vision for Spirit Park not only aims to enhance the quality of life for current

residents but also positions Fort St. James as a destination for visitors, bringing energy and vitality to the downtown core. As we look to the future, this park will be a testament to the power of community collaboration and the shared goal of creating a brighter, more inclusive, and sustainable place for everyone.



LEGEND

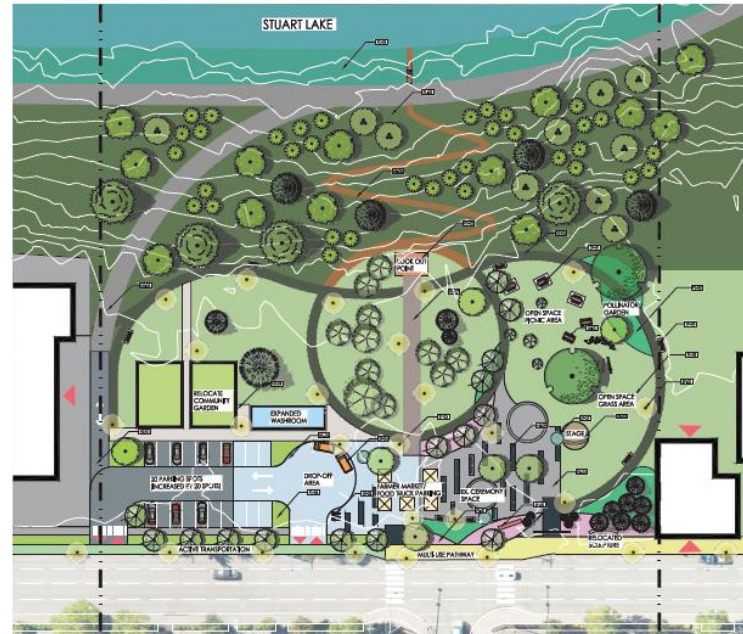
- ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR
- MULTI-USE PATHWAY
- ROAD FOR SERVICE CAR
- PARK LOOP PATHWAY
- PROMENADE PATHWAY
- SECONDARY PATHWAY
- WATER ACCESS TRAIL
- PROGRAM SYNERGIES
- ACCESS NODES
- PROGRAM AREA
- CONSTRAINTS

Design Approach: Spirit Park Concept Plan



REFERENCE NOTES SCHEDULE PLAN

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What in your opinion should be prioritized in the Spirit Park in the next 5, 10 and 15 years? (5 being the most important)

EROSION CONTROL FOR SHORELINE	
RELOCATED COMMUNITY GARDEN	
EXPANDED FOOD TRUCK AND MARKET AREA	
IMPROVED PARKING AREA	
PARK CIRCULATION AND ACCESSIBILITY	
LAKEVIEW OPTIMIZATION	
SENSITIVE STREET AND NIGHT LIGHTING DESIGN	
UPGRADING OF EXISTING PARK WASHROOMS	
SUSTAINABLE SHRUBS AND PLANTS	

Guiding Design Principles:

- Create a user-centric design to improve safety, comfort and accessibility
- Promote environmental sustainability using native plants, green infrastructure and minimum resource consumption
- Improve circulation and connectivity
- Revitalize character and form at the intersection of the park, streetscape, and downtown
- Develop Park recreation options (active and passive) that support community inclusion and social interaction
- Celebrate local culture, environment and community

Let us know your thoughts!
What do you like? What don't you like?

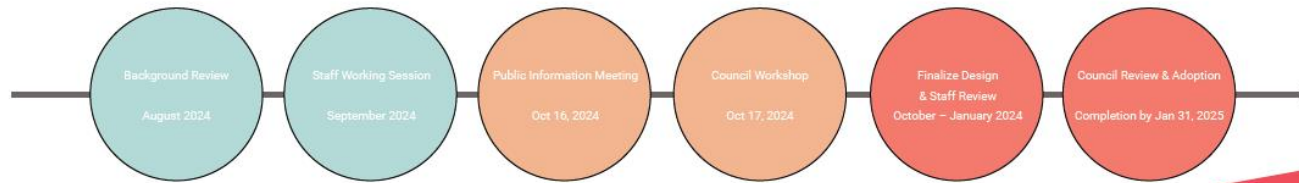
Write your comments on sticky notes and place them in the box



Have We Missed Anything?



Park Redesign Timeline And Milestones:



Write your comments on sticky notes and place them in the box!