



## MEDIA RELEASE

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June 17, 2016

### **Planning underway for Strathcona Gardens Revitalization Project**

**Campbell River, BC** – Preliminary plans for a Strathcona Gardens Revitalization Project are taking shape. Last year, a Needs Assessment study examined current levels of service delivery at the recreation complex and the ability to continue delivering that service into the future. The results of the study showed the existing structure is aging and unable to meet the needs of the community, both now and into the future. In February of this year, the Strathcona Gardens Commission approved a renewal plan for Strathcona Gardens, and at its June 15 meeting, the Commission supported a preliminary project plan to help guide the next phase of the Revitalization Project.

In 2013, the Regional District began reviewing and evaluating the programs and services at Strathcona Gardens and, in 2015, asked the public for feedback and ideas on how it could better meet their recreational needs and expectations. The Needs Assessment was the first phase of this project, identifying facility deficiencies and highlighting the need to plan for the future. A final report presented to the Strathcona Gardens Commission in February of this year outlined a number of potential actions, including operational enhancements, business planning and facility redevelopment possibilities.

*“Strathcona Gardens is a significant public asset that contributes to the health and well being of our communities, providing countless personal, social and economic benefits to everyone,”* said Strathcona Gardens Commission Chair Michele Babchuk. *“The facility needs assessment was an opportunity for the Regional District to engage with the public and find out how well we are doing. What we heard is that the existing facility has many limitations and is unable to meet the demands of users. The next step for us in addressing those issues is to continue working with the public and users of the facility to make sure we have it right before committing to a specific future vision.”*

The Revitalization Project has three phases:

1. The facility needs assessment;
2. The project development phase (the feasibility study); and
3. The project delivery phase (including detailed design and construction).

The current phase of the project will include business case development and technical investigations that will form part of the feasibility study. Public engagement will be integral to the successful outcome of this project.

A renewed Strathcona Gardens is a multi-year undertaking that will require significant funding for completion. The Regional District is doing its part to build reserves in anticipation of major senior government funding opportunities. Babchuk acknowledges that funding a project of this scale requires careful financial planning: *“We are committed to finding the best way forward to manage existing funds and leverage dollars from other sources while minimizing the tax impact on citizens. There is still much work to be done before we will have a clear picture of what lies*

*ahead. Full public engagement will be essential for the development of a renewed Strathcona Gardens that will meet the public's recreational and leisure expectations in an exciting, modern and healthy environment"*

It is expected that phase two of the Revitalization Project will be complete by December 2017.

### **Quick Facts**

- A review of programs and services offered by Strathcona Gardens has been underway since 2013.
- Phase 1 of the Strathcona Gardens Revitalization Project began in 2015, and included a Facility Needs Assessment study to clarify public needs and interests and determine the ability of recreation complex to deliver the service levels required now and into the future.
- The Needs Assessment study found the existing recreation complex is aging and unable to meet the desired level of programs and services, and provided a number of conceptual ideas for further consideration.
- The Strathcona Gardens Commission approved a conceptual plan for a renewed facility in February 2016.
- The Regional District Board of Directors further supported the decision by committing \$1.03 million annually for the next seven years to prepare for potential grant funding opportunities.
- The total estimated cost of the project is \$21.8 million.
- Phase 2 of the Revitalization Project will deliver a feasibility study for a preferred concept.
- The expected completion date for Phase 2 is December 2017.

To learn more about the Strathcona Gardens Revitalization Project, visit: [www.strathconard.ca](http://www.strathconard.ca).

The Strathcona Regional District is a partnership of four electoral areas and five municipalities providing approximately 43,000 residents with 55 services including parks, liquid and solid waste systems, fire protection, emergency preparedness programs and a full-service sports facility.

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