



COUNCIL REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: August 17, 2020

SUBMITTED BY: K. van Steenoven, A/Director, Engineering

PREPARED BY: S. Willis, Environmental Project Manager, J. Chernuka, Environmental Inspector

REPORT TITLE: City of Leduc Wetland Restoration Initiative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alberta Environment and Parks ("AEP") has funding available through their Wetland Replacement Program to support eligible wetland construction and restoration projects across the region. The City of Leduc ("City"), in partnership with Associated Environmental Consultants Inc. ("Associated"), is proposing to complete a wetland restoration project within the City contingent on approved funding through AEP.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the Wetland Restoration 2020 capital project to a maximum of \$240,000 once confirmation has been received that the City of Leduc's proposal to the Alberta Environment and Parks wetland replacement funding has been approved.

RATIONALE

The loss of wetland areas across Alberta due to agricultural, commercial, and industrial development has been substantial and ecologically devastating. The AEP Wetland Replacement Program serves to re-establish wetlands in partnership with municipalities across the region to help offset this loss.

The City of Leduc has established a relationship with AEP through the signing of a memorandum of understanding, and submitted the attached Wetland Restoration proposal to AEP for review, and potential approval for funding.

In consultation with Associated and AEP a location for wetland restoration was identified on City land, north of Telford Lake. This area was historically drained for agricultural use and has since been acquired by the City as part of the multiway system.

A restored wetland in this area will provide unique opportunities for biodiversity and improved habitat connectivity to the City of Leduc's largest environmentally significant area, Telford Lake.

In addition, the wetland restoration has the potential to reduce maintenance costs to the City by:

- restoring a field that's presently dominated by noxious weeds, and
- improving drainage in the area of the multiway trail that currently collects water and is prone to flooding.

Due to its proximity to the multiway trail and visibility from Telford Lake, the wetland will also provide a unique opportunity to engage, inspire, and educate the public on the ecological benefits of wetlands which include:

- Improving water quality
- Minimizing the impacts of extreme weather events (flooding and drought)
- Stabilizing banks and preventing erosion
- Supporting biodiversity by providing aquatic and terrestrial habitat for vegetation and wildlife
- Carbon storage

COUNCIL REQUEST FOR DECISION

As the wetland to be restored is located in the flight path of the Edmonton International Airport, the wetlands would be designed to limit the attraction of waterfowl, with minimal areas of open water and a focus on emergent plants and shrub species.

STRATEGIC / RELEVANT PLANS ALIGNMENT

This project is supported by the following City of Leduc plans:

- Strategic Plan:
"We are committed to protecting our natural and built environment."
"We will continue to look for ways to be a more effective steward of our water resources."
"We strive to balance our growth and development with care and respect for our natural environment."
- Draft Municipal Development Plan 2020:
2.2.1 Environmental Sustainability, 2.2.6 Urban Forest and Natural Habitats, 2.4.4 Stormwater
- The City of Leduc Environmental Plan (2012):
Section (7) Land – "Vision: the community has made effective decisions on how local land resources should be used." Actions include "The City will protect natural areas and work on habitat restoration," and "the City of Leduc will consider strategies to enhance their existing natural area protection measures."

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

ADMINISTRATION:

The proposal was developed by Engineering in consultation with Planning, Public Services, and Community Development; all departments involved have agreed upon the proposed wetland location.

The project will be managed by Engineering with the help of Associated Engineering.

RISK ANALYSIS: FINANCIAL / LEGAL:

The project is anticipated to cost approximately \$240,000 and is contingent on funding approval from AEP. If approved, there will be no financial implications for the City - only flow through costs with the funding from AEP. Project invoicing will align with the funding milestones outlined by AEP.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATIONS:

Environmental Services and Communications and Marketing Services will collaborate in developing an effective plan for announcing the beginning of construction and celebrating the completion of the wetland restoration.

Once complete, opportunities will exist to engage the public and provide education on the benefits of wetland restoration.

ALTERNATIVES:

That Council request we do not pursue this opportunity.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Alberta Environment and Parks City of Leduc Wetland Restoration Proposal, Associated Environmental Consultants Inc.