

HALIFAX

BMBCL Update Report

Regional Council
May 23, 2023

Richard Harvey, Manager, Policy and Planning
Parks & Recreation

Origin

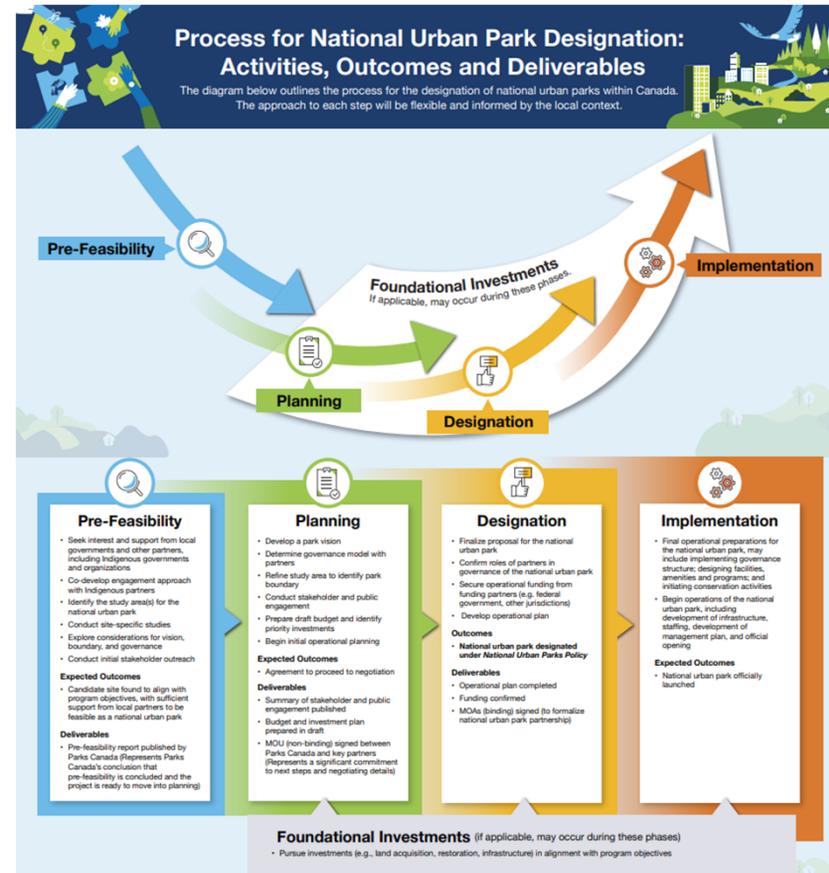
Regional Council Motion – December 7, 2021

1. Initiate a park planning project for Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes as outlined in this report, based on the consideration of:
 - (a) the existing conceptual park boundary to reflect new circumstances, such as the municipality's Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes land acquisitions; and
 - (b) an enlarged conceptual park boundary to the north of the Highway 113 Corridor, as represented on Map 11 of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy;
2. Undertake initial work on the park planning project to include:
 - (a) formalizing the roles of the Province, Nova Scotia Nature Trust, and Parks Canada;
 - (b) determining Mi'kmaq perspectives and interests in the project;
 - (c) consulting and receiving feedback on the project with community stakeholder groups and the public;
 - (d) determining the role of a possible committee or group to support and contribute to the project, and forms of public consultation;
 - (e) undertaking background studies and reviews; and
3. Negotiate and execute contribution agreements or other agreements, including those with Parks Canada for work related to the initiation of the park planning project such as background studies, subject to the availability of municipal funds that may be required, within approved capital and operating budgets or as otherwise approved by Regional Council

Parks Canada National Urban Parks Program

With a new National Urban Park program initiated by the federal government, BMBCL was identified as a candidate National Urban Park and a Statement of Collaboration was signed with HRM

This is resulting in the advancement of the Regional Park and the consideration of the National Urban Park designation



Partnership Group

In conjunction with the Parks Canada National Urban Park program, oversight of the conceptual park planning project and related initiatives is being undertaken by a “Partnership Group”, which includes:

- Parks Canada;
- The Province of Nova Scotia, represented by Environment and Climate Change;
- HRM;
- Nova Scotia Nature Trust;
- Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia as represented by Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMK); and
- Sipekne'katik First Nation

Background Research

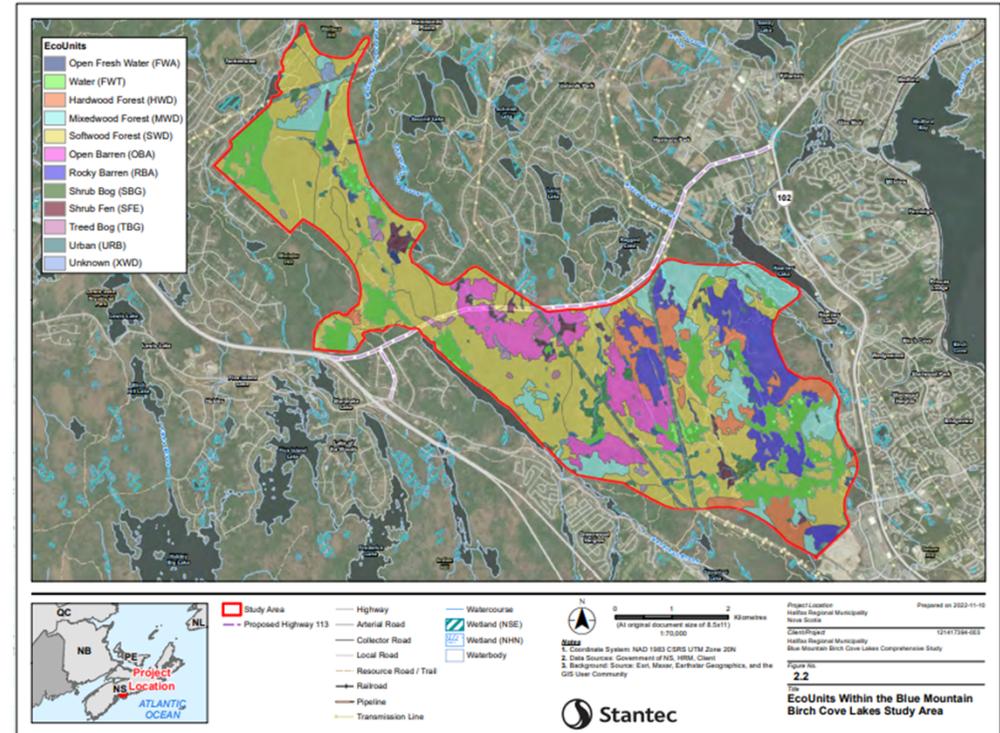
Over the past year, background work has been undertaken, with a focus on:

- Ecological and Recreational Current Conditions
- Archaeological and Cultural Study
- Land Use and Settlement Analysis
- Governance

A broad context area has been studied to support a subsequent park plan on public lands

Included extensive public / stakeholder engagement

Final report to be posted on the HRM website in the coming weeks



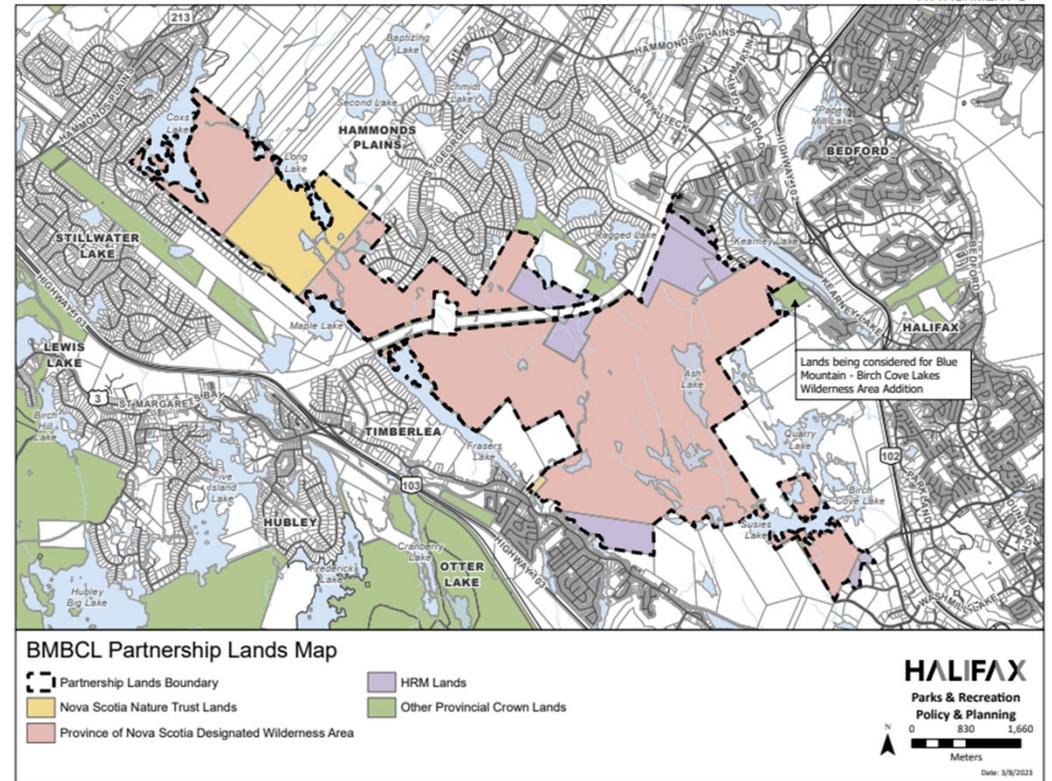
Park Planning

The next stage of work being led by HRM is detailed park planning

The focus area is the HRM, Provincial, and Nova Scotia Nature Trust lands

This will include public and stakeholder engagement

Other initiatives are also occurring through the National Urban Park program, including those by other partners



Infrastructure Development and Planning

There is a high rate of development occurring within the city, including lands adjoining the BMBCL Area

Consequently, there has been a need to both plan and develop parkland infrastructure ahead of detailed park planning

For example, parking areas and trails have been established and are being planned with funding support from Parks Canada

Recommendation

It is recommended that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to advance the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) conceptual park planning project and Parks Canada National Urban Park program as outlined within this staff report.