



DECISION TO APPROVE PROPOSAL FOR THE DIVESTITURE/TRANSFER OF SYLVAN LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK TO THE TOWN OF SYLVAN LAKE

What We Heard

Alberta Parks conducted a 60-day online public consultation on the Sylvan Lake Provincial Park Divestiture/Transfer proposal from March 15 to May 15, 2017. Public input was received through 51 online responses through ParkNews. Public comments were related to the following key topic areas:

- Environmental stewardship and conservation of Sylvan Lake
- Uncertainty over the future plans for the lands
- Enforcement of regulations and maintenance
- Community economic development
- Accessibility of the park; and,
- Municipal budget constraints and taxation

There were many responses expressing support for the proposal, which included the following key themes:

- *The Town of Sylvan Lake is well positioned to manage the park to promote the best interests of local community and to support the development of infrastructure that supports public recreation at Sylvan Lake.*
- *The Town of Sylvan Lake will be better able than Alberta Parks to enforce bylaws, monitor park activities and public safety.*
- *As it has already been doing for the past several years through an agreement with Alberta Parks, the Town of Sylvan Lake will be better able than Alberta Parks to maintain the park and facilities.*

- *Divestiture will enable Alberta Parks to make better use of its resources and invest in other provincial parks*

A summary of public concerns and questions and Alberta Parks' responses are provided in the following table.

What We Heard	Alberta Parks Response
<p>The Town of Sylvan Lake's resources and capacity are already too limited to effectively take on maintenance and operations of the Sylvan Lake PP Day Use Area.</p>	<p>Alberta Parks already co-manages the site in partnership with the Town of Sylvan Lake, and they have been heavily and successfully involved in park operations and maintenance.</p> <p>The land transfer would enable the park to be managed by a single authority, which would be much more cost-effective and straightforward.</p> <p>Provision of a payment of \$1,964,846 to the town will assist with capital maintenance items and upgrades and also with short term operational maintenance costs to aid in the transition.</p>
<p>The Town of Sylvan Lake is interested in community economic development and is not as interested in ensuring equitable access to the park for all visitors.</p>	<p>Community economic development and maintaining widespread public access are not mutually exclusive, in fact ensuring access to the park by a wide diversity of users is considered advantageous to the town's community development and tourism goals. Furthermore, a legally binding caveat (condition) will be placed on the land title if it is transferred to the town. This caveat legally binds the town to manage and retain all of the park lands as publicly accessible recreation space.</p>
<p>It is not clear what types of future developments would or would not be allowed on the land if transferred to the Town of Sylvan Lake.</p>	<p>A legally binding caveat (condition) will be placed on the land title if it is transferred to the town. This caveat legally binds the town to manage and retain all the park lands as publicly accessible recreation space. The town would not be able to sell the land without the consent of the Minister. If consent were to be granted, the legally binding caveat would continue to apply, and the lands would remain for the purpose of public recreation.</p> <p>Future park developments to support recreation and park access would be subject to the standard municipal planning and development process and in</p>

	alignment with the Town of Sylvan Lake's Waterfront Area Redevelopment Plan.
Alberta Parks has a mandate to conserve and protect the environment. The Town of Sylvan Lake's primary interests are in community economic development, and the Town is less interested in conservation and protection of the lake ecosystem.	<p>Only the dry-land portion of the park would be transferred to the town. The bed and shore portion of the park would remain under the administrative control of the Alberta Government. The water body and lake bed are administered by the Ministry of Environment and Parks under authority of the <i>Water Act</i> and <i>Public Lands Act</i>. Federal regulations regarding fish habitat and navigable waters remain unchanged.</p> <p>Sylvan Lake Provincial Park does not have significant ecological value and does not meet national reporting criteria for protected areas. Keeping Sylvan Lake Provincial Park within provincial ownership will not improve environmental integrity at Sylvan Lake.</p>