

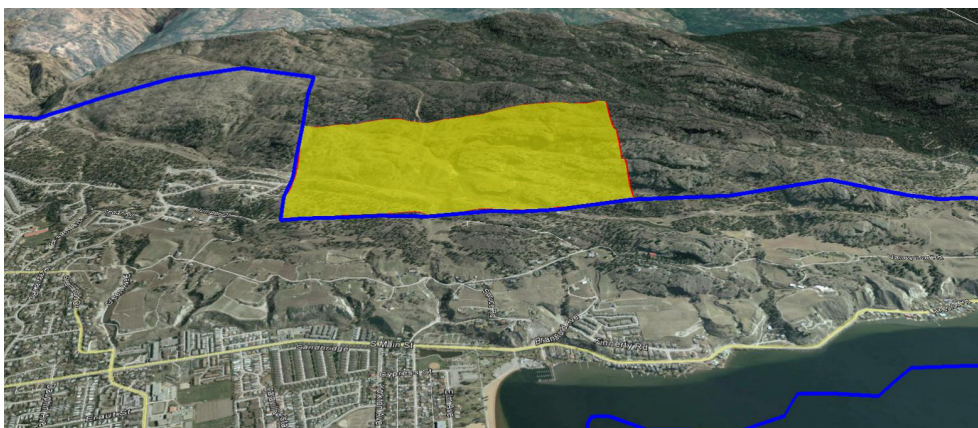


## Bringing the Bluffs into the City

An application to bring a 300-acre parcel into City limits is the first step towards an expansion of the Skaha Bluffs Provincial Park and the addition of 180 new homes to our housing inventory. After several years of planning and community involvement, the City has applied to the Province for a boundary extension to annex the parcel on the south end of the city between the Wiltse area and the Skaha Bluffs Provincial Park.

The vision for this parcel was first introduced in 2014 as part of the Upper Wiltse Area Structure Plan, which forms part of the Official Community Plan. Recognizing the high ecological and recreational value of the lands, the plan identified about 80% of the land for conservation and park, and about 20% for residential development.

“This area is actively used by climbers and hikers but is currently private property and future access is not guaranteed,” says Ben Johnson, Special Projects Manager with the City. “The landowners are exploring options to donate a section of the parcel to the park and make this access permanent. There are still a number of steps required before this can happen but with the application for annexation, we are on our way.”



The City has applied to bring a 300-acre parcel, next to the Wiltse area, into city limits. The vision for this parcel was first introduced in the 2014 Upper Wiltse Area Structure Plan.



Photo courtesy of Carol Bentley

The Skaha Bluffs Provincial Park is home to California Big Horn Sheep and an active hiking and climbing community. An application to extend Penticton's boundaries is the first step towards an expansion of the park and a new residential development.

In exchange for donating a section of the parcel for parks, the landowner has the potential to receive tax benefits from the Federal Government through the Ecological Gifts Program.

### Community approval

In British Columbia, all requests to annex land into a municipal boundary must have approval of the community. To determine if the community supports this application to extend our boundaries, the City is using the Alternative Approval Process. Under this process, residents who oppose the application have 30 days to complete a petition and submit it to City Hall. If more than 10% of the population oppose, a referendum is required before the application can proceed. Residents who support

the project do not need to complete a petition. The petition form is available at City Hall or online at [shapeyourcitypenticton.ca](http://shapeyourcitypenticton.ca). Check the website to confirm the dates of the Alternative Approval Process.

### Next steps

If the boundary extension application has the support of the community and is approved by the Provincial Cabinet, the next step is to subdivide and zone the land. BC Parks will work closely with the City and the landowners on the proposed expansion and plans for the first phases of residential development will move forward subject to Council approval and community input.

“The potential to add another 180 residential units to Penticton's tight housing market is another advantage of the plan,” says Johnson. “This will help us meet demand from growth in an area easily serviced by adjacent roads and infrastructure. Before this can happen, we will clearly communicate the financial, social and environmental impacts of the entire development so that the public has all of the information they need to fully consider the proposal.”





## 'Something fishy' is happening downtown

Early October is still a great time to catch a glimpse of Kokanee moving along Penticton Creek to spawn. The viewing platform near the Ellis Street bridge has become a popular tour and viewing location for the return of this inspiring fall ritual.

In 2015, the City restored a portion of the Penticton Creek downstream of the bridge as a 'Showcase Project' to gauge the impacts on flood protection and fish habitat. The project exceeded expectations and the City is now taking the success of the Showcase Project forward with a restoration master plan for the full 4.5 kilometers of Penticton Creek's urban passage.

Penticton Creek was channelized in the 1950s in response to flooding that devastated Penticton's downtown. While the concrete channel helped with flood management, native fish species struggled with the loss of natural creek habitat and populations decreased. Over time, the concrete channel deteriorated and in 2012, the community identified the restoration of the creek as a priority for the Downtown Plan.

The Penticton Creek Restoration Committee was established in 2015



Paul Askey with Freshwater Fisheries BC displays a Kokanee from the Penticton Creek. The Penticton Creek Master Plan will help restore the creek, providing a more natural habitat for native fish species while meeting today's standards for flood infrastructure.

to guide the creation of a master plan for the work. The proposed plan recommends replacing the deteriorating concrete channel with works that include riffles, river rock and natural pools to provide a more natural habitat for native fish populations while meeting today's standards for flood infrastructure. The work would be performed in several phases over many years at an estimated cost of \$30 million, pending funding.

Visit [shapeyourcitypenticton.ca](http://shapeyourcitypenticton.ca) for details of the plan to create a safe

and healthy creek for years to come and leave your thoughts. The plan will be presented to Council for final approval in the fall. For now, take the time to enjoy a stroll down the creek as leaves are changing and the fish are spawning.

### Penticton Creek Master Plan Top 10 Features

- 20 unique creek sections
- Increasing the space between the water level and the top of the berm
- Removal of deteriorating concrete
- More seating and recreational space
- Improved viewing and pedestrian pathways
- Greater bridge clearance
- Natural creek formations
- Deeper pools for year round habitat
- Expanded flood plain
- Meandering low flow, fish passable channels

### History of the Penticton Creek 'channel'

In response to a severe 1942 flood, Council in the 1950s took several steps to protect private property, including physical flood control measures. Years later, this infrastructure is eroding badly and doesn't meet today's standards for flood protection infrastructure.

