

## Revitalized public spaces and pathways part of Viking Park Connectivity Project

(Gimli, MB October 16, 2019) The Icelandic Festival of Manitoba (IFM), together with its partner, the RM of Gimli, is pleased to release new concept drawings and descriptions of the Viking Park Connectivity Project. An Open House will be held on November 9, from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Lady of the Lake Theatre in the Waterfront Centre, 94 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. Gimli.

Grant Stefanson, IFM President and Co-Chair of the Viking Park Campaign Cabinet, announced the Viking Park Connectivity Project at the 2019 Islendingadagurinn.

"We are developing public areas and pathways that will provide safe walking and biking trails, highlight cultural history and other features. The development will extend a continuous pathway from Viking Park to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Centre Street eastward toward the pier," Stefanson said. "With improved street markings for pedestrians, new sidewalks, benches and newly planted and preserved trees, the area will be safer, more usable and have a parklike feel. Wayfinding markers at the intersection of the Breakwater Boardwalk and First Avenue, and the Town Centre will provide maps, directional signage and historical information."

"The Municipality is looking forward to working in partnership with the Viking Park and the invested Community groups to actively enhance our public spaces for the enjoyment of our residents and visitors," said Mayor Lynn Greenberg.

"When Government and Community groups apply supportive partnerships in investments for the greater good of the community the investments become successful legacies. We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to everyone that has worked together to see this exciting project move forward," Mayor Greenberg said.

"Viking Park received a 92 per cent approval rating from the community when it opened in 2017 and we expect the Viking Park Connectivity project to garner an even better response," said Kathi Thorarinson-Neal, Viking Park Co-Chair. "Individual and corporate support will be recognized by enabling donors to share their stories in named spaces along newly created pathways and in revitalized public spaces."

-more-

The plans for the Viking Park Connectivity Project were developed in collaboration with the RM of Gimli and a consultative group made up the Viking Park Cabinet Committee; Lorna Tergesen, Ernest Stefanson, Tim Samson, Arni Thorsteinson, Tim Arnason, Grant Stefanson, Kathi Thorarinson-Neal. In addition, the RM of Gimli, the Betel Home Foundation, the Betel Heritage Foundation, the Gimli Harbour Authority, the Gimli Yacht Club, the Lakeview Resort Gimli, the Gimli Art Club and other community participants. The consultative process took place over last winter and was led by HTFC Planning & Design, the landscape architects who developed Viking Park.

On August 9, 2017, the Government of Canada and Government of Manitoba announced funding for 42 infrastructure projects in 37 communities under the federal government's Small Communities Fund each contributing over \$10 million toward the estimated \$34.6 million in total project costs. Among the wide range of projects receiving funding under this program is the Viking Park Connectivity project. The Viking Park project includes accessible bike lanes, pathways, landscaping and other beautification measures of the area in the town of Gimli that will help generate economic activity and boost regional development. Canada and Manitoba have each generously contributed \$300,000 toward the \$1,000,000 total project cost with the remaining \$400,000 to be raised by the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba; through fundraising, donors and assistance from the RM of Gimli.

The Icelandic Festival of Manitoba partnered with the RM of Gimli and the Betel Home Foundation in 2014 to begin a project to create a park surrounding the Viking Statue. More information can be found in the attached Viking Park Connectivity Project Donor Booklet available at the Icelandic Festival Office 107-94 1<sup>st</sup>. Ave Gimli, at H.P. Tergesen's & Sons and online at [www.icelandicfestival.com](http://www.icelandicfestival.com).

Contact: Kristine Sigurdson, Icelandic Festival office, 204-642-7417.