



Report to Council

From the Offices of Councillor Diana Dilworth and Councillor Meghan Lahti

Date: May 6, 2021

Subject: Shaping the Next Port Moody – Signature Park for the Southwest Shore

Purpose

To ask for Council consideration of the long-term development of a new signature park on the southwest shore of Port Moody, comprising our existing public lands including the Barnet Landfill Site, Westhill Park, and Alfred Howe Trail. The City has a unique opportunity at this time to build a better future for Port Moody with the creation of new, sustainable park infrastructure for the residents on the south shore of our community.

Recommendation

WHEREAS The City of Port Moody Parks and Recreation Masterplan outlines the need for increased park in an effort to meet the needs of our growing population;

AND WHEREAS Parks are a significant economic generator and are essential to personal health and well-being, and provide greenspaces that are essential to human, environmental, and ecological well-being;

AND WHEREAS the City of Port Moody has established a Development Cost Charges bylaw to address the City's needs in relation to future parkland infrastructure, and these reserve funds may only be used for capital costs relating to an approved development cost charge bylaw;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City identify the public lands of the Barnet Landfill Site, Westhill Park, and Alfred Howe Trail, to be assembled together for the development of a new signature park on the southwest shore of Port Moody as recommended in the report dated May 6, 2021 from the Offices of Councillor Diana Dilworth and Councillor Meghan Lahti regarding Shaping the Next Port Moody – Signature Park for the Southwest Shore;

AND THAT the establishment of a signature south shore park be included as a parks project identified within the City's Development Cost Charges Project List;

AND THAT as part of the OCP's engagement processes, the concept of a south shore signature park be introduced as a mid-to-long term project for the community.

Background

Both of us have been regularly raising the idea of not only maximizing use of existing parks but the creation of new ones. We are at a unique time now where we can use our imagination and planning to create a large, contiguous, signature park on the south shore of our community, serving College Park, Seaview, Glenayre, Woodlands and Westport, and parts of Moody Centre.

As a growing vibrant community, we are faced with current challenges in terms of adequate park space (both passive and active) across the breadth of the City. The reality is that we do not have an abundance of land to create new parks, despite the fact that we will be collecting millions of dollars, through our Development Cost Charges Bylaw, for parkland acquisition and improvement. These funds, collected at the time of development, are intended to be used for the provision of parks in the city to meet the needs of our residents, however, given the lack of public lands and the cost of purchasing private lands for this purpose, the use of these publicly held lands is a solution that needs to be considered. While signature parks currently exist on the north shore (Bert Flinn Park) and in the centre of our community (Rocky Point Park), there currently is no signature park type amenity for residents of the southwestern portion of the City.

The *2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan* notes that the current formula of 2.5ha per 1,000 population will be challenging to meet without the acquisition of land to create new amenity space. The opportunity available to us at this point is to use existing P1 zoned public properties to create much needed passive and active park space which can help relieve the demand on our other signature parks.

As we are moving to densify transit-oriented developments, the impact on Rocky Point Park has been identified as a growing concern as the park already enjoys visits by not only local residents but also people from within the region and beyond. During the development of the City's *Tourism Strategic Plan (2016)* a survey of visitors identified those that have travelled from all over the lower mainland, from Alberta and even a couple from the United Kingdom.

A unique opportunity currently exists for Council to think long-term, address growing concerns about access to park space and increased parking issues in current parks. Currently, the City holds approximately 60 acres of public land on the southwestern shore that can be connected, developed, and enhanced into a new, singular, contiguous, signature park.

Lands to be Considered for Park Assembly

Barnet Landfill Site (27.6 acres)

Currently this piece of property is a blank slate, with its primary usage as storage for city assets. Recent consultancy work on the property noted that it does currently meets parkland remediation standards and is well-suited for the provision of park space.

Westhill Park (31.8 acres)

Established decades ago and enhanced over the years, this facility features a seasonal outdoor swimming pool, outdoor exercise equipment, covered lacrosse box, turf soccer pitch, baseball diamonds, and a children's playground. Prior to the pandemic, the City's Youth Focus committee used Westhill as their primary meeting space.



It is worth noting that the old Participaction Loop Trail, located at the south end of Westhill, is currently being refurbished by the Port Moody Rotary Club as a fully-accessible, nature trail.

The new proposed park area would be adjacent to the Trans-Canada trail, across the Barnet Highway from Reed Point Marina, and is connected through a very large network of both formal and informal trails.

Alfred Howe Greenway (2.2 km each way).

This trail connects the Westhill Park and the waterfront at Reed Point, with a further connection to the Trans-Canada Trail.

Discussion

The vision of the assembly of public lands for parks space is to provide for an inclusive, welcoming space that contributes to the health and wellness of our community. The space that we are proposing already includes baseball diamonds, lacrosse box, soccer field, playground equipment, a swimming pool and large trail network. We have the unique opportunity to enhance existing public amenity space without having to purchase land.

With Bert Flinn Park providing for an outdoor nature experience, and Rocky Point Park a waterfront gathering space connected to the Shoreline Trail, this new space can be planned and designed to include features that we do not necessarily have in our other parks.

Great parks make you feel good when you get there. They are open in their design and welcoming in their attitude. Regardless of your gender, age, cultural background, or affinity group, you know you are in a public space that has been designed with you in mind, and you have little hesitation to enter and enjoy yourself. You enter knowing you are in a safe place, joining others who share your need to get away, relax, exercise, play with your kids, or help your dog meet new friends.

We also have the opportunity, as part of public consultation, to engage with our BIPOC community to help guide the development of space that will be a beacon for inclusiveness. We can also use the opportunity to further recognize our Indigenous history and work with our local Indigenous communities and artists on how to best acknowledge the lands.



Potential features of a new signature park could include, but not limited to:

- Water features: fountains, a waterpark
- Youth park: playground, skateboard, bike trials
- Small sport courts: pickleball, tennis, basketball
- Community gardens
- Off-leash dog areas
- Outdoor theatre and concert space
- Open plaza with landscaping inviting
- Public art highlighted throughout the space
- Columbarium and memorial space
- Playground equipment: accessible and for residents of all ages
- Outdoor games: chess boards, ping pong tables
- Food and beverage opportunities: similar to Boathouse, Pajos, Rocky Point Ice Cream



With the size and scope of the properties, we can plan for a significant and appropriate amount of parking, including the option of underground parking, in an effort to utilize all the land available for park use.

While there is a standing motion of Council to relocate the Public Works Yard to the Barnet Landfill Site, it is recognized that the works yard would require three (3-4) acres in total (double the existing works yard), there is adequate land to include the works yard as part of a south shore signature park. The integration of civic facilities and park space has been successfully achieved in other municipalities, including Coquitlam's Town Centre and Surrey's Bear Creek Park.

Other Option(s)

1. THAT the report dated May 6, 2021 from the Offices of Councillor Diana Dilworth and Councillor Meghan Lahti regarding Shaping the Next Port Moody – New Signature Park for South West Shore be received for information.
2. THAT the report dated May 6, 2021 from the Offices of Councillor Diana Dilworth and Councillor Meghan Lahti regarding Shaping the Next Port Moody – New Signature Park for South West Shore be referred to staff for a report back on implications of considering a new park.

Financial Implications

Costs for the integration of the existing public lands would not be a costly venture but development of the Barnet Landfill site as an active/passive park space would require substantial funding, to be determined by a feasibility study and/or project development process.

Development Cost Charges (DCCs) are collected for the provision of Utilities and for Parks Acquisition and Improvement and could be a source from which to allocate funds.

Additionally, there are other Reserves that can be used for the purpose of the development of a new signature park, including the Density Bonus Reserve. The reserve currently has a balance of \$13 million.

Both the federal and provincial governments have capital grant programs for the provision of new and upgraded park and recreation facilities, which may also be a source of funding.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Planning for and establishing such a significant new addition to our park inventory will require a commitment by the City to a long-term communications and civic engagement strategy. In addition to including community input regarding potential amenities to be included in the park through the OCP process, the City should seek input from our community in a variety of other ways, including the engagement of local artists, seniors, BIPOC, and youth.

In addition, significant partnerships will be forged with our Indigenous leaders in an effort to ensure that this park is a reflection of our shared history and knowledge of traditional territories. With a focus on the future and a respect for our past, this park can be a symbol of our commitment to reconciliation based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

City Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan clearly focuses on the vision of the amazing quality of life that our residents enjoy. As a vibrant, growing community, it behooves us to look long-term to ensure that quality is maintained and the establishment of a new south shore signature park addresses the following Council's strategic priorities:

Environmental Leadership:

- Expand and make the most of our parks and green spaces and design them to create positive and diverse experiences throughout the community;
- Optimize and expand parks to meet the community's needs; and
- Create diverse, natural, open-space experiences throughout the community;

Health City:

- Provide local services and access to amenities for residents of all ages and abilities; and
- Ensure the built environment and infrastructure allows for, and encourages, active living;

Community Evolution:

- Be stewards of City lands to optimize benefits to community well-being;
- Make progress towards the improvement and sustainability of City facilities to meet emerging needs; and
- Create engage public spaces by incorporating or highlighting arts and culture, innovate urban design, events, recreation, natural assets.