

**PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMISSION**

TO:           MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT:   BARNET MARINE PARK PARKING UPDATE

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the report titled “Barnet Marine Park Parking Update” from the General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 13, 2023, be received for information.

**REPORT**

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission, at its meeting held on June 13, 2023, received and adopted the attached report providing information on the parking challenges at Barnet Marine Park and the plans for improvements.

On behalf of the Parks,  
Recreation and Culture  
Commission,

Councillor S. Dhaliwal  
Chair

Commissioner R. Kent  
Vice Chair

**TO:** PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMISSION (PRCC)  
**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE  
**SUBJECT:** **BARNET MARINE PARK PARKING UPDATE**  
**PURPOSE:** To provide Commission and Council with information on the parking challenges at Barnet Marine Park and the plans for improvements.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the PRC Commission receive the report from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture titled "Barnet Marine Park Parking Update" dated June 13, 2023 for information; and

**THAT** Commission forward the report from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture titled "Barnet Marine Park Update" dated June 13, 2023 to Council for information.

### **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

This report supports the following Council adopted policies and plans/strategies: City's Equity Policy (2020), Corporate Strategic Plan (2017), Social Sustainability Strategy (2016), Burnaby Transportation Plan (2021) and Healthy Community Policy (1991).

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

Barnet Marine Park ("the Park") is a popular recreational destination located on the shores of the Burrard Inlet in North Burnaby. It stands out among the City's parks due to its access to marine waterfront and beach areas. As a result, the Park experiences a high demand from the public, especially during the summer months. The estimated annual visitor count exceeds 276,000, with peak periods attracting over 1,900 daily visitors. Most visitors arrive by vehicle, leading to significant parking lot demand, which can reach up to 1,000 vehicles per day. Unfortunately, the Park's popularity has also brought about ongoing challenges in parking and traffic management, affecting the safety of park users.

**3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Park features three parking lots, providing a total of 450 parking spaces. *Attachment 1* displays the location and distribution of these parking lots. Two lots, with a combined capacity of 300 parking stalls, directly serve the Park and offer three pedestrian access points to the beach area. These access points involve at-grade rail crossings situated on the east and west sides of both lots. Additionally, a pedestrian overpass entrance is available from the west parking lot, conveniently placed between the two north lots. The overflow parking lot, shared with the Mountain Air Bike Skills Park, comprises 150 parking stalls and is located to the south, across Barnet Road. On the north side of the tracks, there are seven additional accessible parking stalls accessible via a reservation/call-in system managed by PRC. Furthermore, the northeast parking lot has eight marked parallel passenger loading (drop-off only) stalls, while accessible parking stalls are available in the north and east lots.

Although recent modifications were made in 2021, including the rebuilding of the northeast parking lot and entry road to meet current safety codes and access standards for vehicles and pedestrians, the Park continues to face vehicle flow concerns. During peak times, congestion in the parking lots and along internal roadways is common, along with high parking demand on summer weekends and vehicle queuing that extends onto Barnet Road. This situation has created challenges for emergency vehicles trying to access the Park during peak hours.

To manage vehicle and pedestrian crowding at Park access routes and entrances during peak periods, City staff and RCMP are deployed. However, the parking lots reach full capacity as early as 11 a.m. on peak days, leading to the activation of two changeable electronic signs located at the east and west entrances of Barnet Road, displaying "Lots Full." Despite these notifications, traffic congestion persists as vehicles continue to circulate the lots in search of vacant parking stalls, resulting in queues on Barnet Road. To handle the overflow and mitigate safety risks associated with frustrated drivers, PRC staff, Bylaw officers, RCMP, and external traffic management control personnel are required to manage traffic and ensure on-site safety. The costs associated with this level of parking management are included below.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, park usage experienced a significant increase, particularly in parks offering water and beach amenities. As a response, Buntzen Lake, Sasamat Lake, and Lynn Canyon Park implemented paid parking or advanced online parking reservation systems.

In 2021, the City commissioned a transportation consultant to conduct a Barnet Marine Park Traffic Review. The consultant provided operational recommendations, which PRC has been implementing where feasible. Despite these efforts, the Park's traffic and parking demand remain high, leading to ongoing operational and safety concerns in the vicinity. As a result, PRC is expediting the implementation of the Traffic Review recommendations and further exploring short-term and long-term strategies to better manage parking demand.

In 2023, Council received a report from PRC prioritizing the development of a Barnet Park Master Plan, set to commence in 2024. A Parking Management Strategy will be an integral part of this Master Plan. In the meantime, given the safety issues and costs, staff will be pursuing potential solutions for the management of the parking lot for 2024 and ahead of any findings from the Master Plan. These options include:

- Paid Parking: Implementing a paid parking system where visitors would pay a fee to park their vehicles within the park. This can help regulate parking demand and generate revenue that can be used for maintenance and improvements in the Park.
- Parking Management Company: Fully managing the site through a parking management company that specializes in efficient parking operations. This option would involve outsourcing the parking management responsibilities to a professional company with expertise in handling parking systems and ensuring optimal utilization of the available parking spaces.

Staff will conduct a thorough analysis of these options, considering their feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and impact on park visitors. A report will be brought back to the Commission and Council in the Fall of 2023, presenting these potential solutions and seeking direction on how to proceed with the parking management for Barnet Marine Park.

**4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Staff will work with communications on encouraging alternate modes of transportation to Barnet Marine Park, including carpooling, transit, and cycling.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of providing City staff to manage the parking issues is approximately \$250,000 (*Attachment 2*). This cost will continue to be managed through the PRC 2023 Operating Budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Morrison-Clark, General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1 – Barnet Marine Park: 2023 Parking Lot Map
- Attachment 2 - Barnet Marine Park: Summer Parking Lot Staffing Table

**REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Andre Kolber, Manager Parks Operations, Steve Bruneau, Director Parks, Dave Critchley, GM Community Safety, and Kathy Ho Senior Manager, Transportation - Transportation Planning.