

TO: MAYOR & COUNCIL
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND
GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE
SUBJECT: **BC PARKWAY PLANNING PROCESS**
PURPOSE: To outline the next steps of the BC Parkway Project.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled “BC Parkway Planning Process” dated July 10, 2023 be received for information; and

THAT a copy of this the report titled “BC Parkway Planning Process” from the General Manager of Planning and Development and General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture dated July 10, 2023 be forwarded to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission for information.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER’S COMMENTS

I concur with the recommendation of the General Manager Planning and Development and the General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

This project aligns with the following City plans and policies:

- Corporate Strategic Plan (2022);
- Regional Context Statement (2013);
- Official Community Plan (1998);
- Metrotown Downtown Plan (2017);
- Economic Development Strategy (2007);
- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011);
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016); and
- Transportation Plan (2021).

2.0 BACKGROUND

The BC Parkway was outlined as a regional amenity by BC Transit as part of the Expo SkyTrain Line. Originally constructed in 1986 along with the Expo Line, it is an important 19-kilometer linear park corridor that provides a critical east-west cycling and pedestrian connection from the Quay in New Westminster, through Burnaby, to False Creek in Vancouver. The corridor is owned by BC Hydro with several legal encumbrances in favour of regional entities and utilities, including TransLink for the Expo Line and the BC

Parkway. Recognizing its significance to the City, the Metrotown Downtown Plan (2017) identified the need to develop a unified urban design approach to address the aesthetic and functional requirements of integrating the Parkway with Beresford Street and Central Boulevard to support the establishment of a connected, accessible, and active Downtown.

An architectural firm, Revery, was previously engaged to develop a high-level concept plan for the corridor (*Attachment 1*), which identified six potential thematic zones and potential enhancement opportunities. On April 24, 2023, Council authorized staff to develop a detailed urban design plan for the Metrotown portion of the BC Parkway, and to seek approval from TransLink, BC Hydro, and other authorities as necessary, for future works on the BC Parkway Corridor.

3.0 PROJECT SCOPE

The project seeks to create an exceptional public space that would transform Downtown Metrotown with a unique sense of place and its own character, while providing residents with functional and fun gathering places, and effectively coordinating civic investments. The scope of the project is within the 30 m wide BC Hydro-owned corridor between Kingsway and the Royal Oak SkyTrain Station.

The initial project is proposed to be carried out in two phases: Phase 1 – Public Awareness and Community Engagement, and Phase 2 – Development of a Framework Plan. This approach allows for creative community engagement opportunities, facilitating early small-scale activations that would allow the community to envision public space opportunities and to share their long-term aspirations and needs for the space. Recognizing the complexity of this project, including multiple land owners and community interests, a more comprehensive Framework Plan is required to understand site condition and constructability, negotiations for property access, First Nations engagement, and further public dialogue for this large and complex public open space.

3.1 Public Awareness and Community Engagement

Staff will be holding a series of temporary passive and active “pop-up” space activations on City owned and managed sites starting this summer and into early fall to raise public awareness of the project. This will provide a creative opportunity to provide the community context on the development of a Framework plan and potential for the site based on early feedback on community aspirations for the space. As the corridor is not currently used as a traditional park or public space, experimenting with activating and programming it for community use will also provide important insight for future plans. The activations will include temporary furnishings, beautification efforts, and activations with cultural and recreation programming, or commercial activities such as food trucks. Staff will work with TransLink to get the necessary approvals to undertake these works.

These temporary space activations are anticipated to continue until such time as the Framework Plan is developed and priority areas identified for construction of permanent improvements. This process is intended to be flexible, responsive to

community needs, and designed to engage the community in the development of the overall Framework Plan.

3.2 Framework Plan

The Framework Plan will provide a long-term vision with supporting strategies for the holistic development of the corridor. This work will involve identification of developable lands within the corridor, establishment of project values, vision, and design criteria with a phased action list to implement the corridor improvements. Staff intend to issue an RFP for this work in summer 2023.

Following Council's endorsement of the Framework Plan, Staff will proceed with the schematic design through to construction of a preferred segment/and or smaller scale improvements with a separate RFP in 2024.

The early findings from the Public Awareness and Community Engagement phase will support the development of the Framework Plan.

4.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE – BC HYDRO AND TRANSLINK

BC Hydro as landowner and TransLink as license holder have a strong interest in the successful implementation of this project, and have expressed desire to participate in the development of the Framework Plan. To ensure clarity in the working relationship between the City, BC Hydro and TransLink in the design and implementation, the parties will develop Terms of Reference that will set out the obligations and commitments of each party to the project.

5.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Project communication and community engagement efforts current underway include a project website, project email address, and a project display board at select City events.

As noted above, as part of a comprehensive and on-going community engagement process, staff are planning a series of temporary activations starting this summer to raise project awareness. In Phase 2, staff will further engage with the public to define the community's aspirations for the developable lands, and to use the feedback to shape the development of the Framework Plan.

It should be noted that the "BC Parkway Enhancement" project name is a placeholder title. Staff will work with the Marketing and Communications Department on a project brand that represents community values and the experiences the project aspires to deliver.

6.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department will provide funding for temporary space activations for the proposed early Public Awareness and Community Engagement Phase by re-allocating existing operating funding and staff time. The Planning and Development, and Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments as joint project sponsors will seek Council approval of the necessary funds to undertake Phase 2, once the winning bid and price is confirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development and Carmen Gonzalez, Acting General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

Attachment 1 – Revery Concept Design

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Charlene Liew, Senior Planner Strategic Initiatives, and reviewed by Karin Hung, Director Strategic Initiatives; Andre Isakov, Director Parks, Recreation, and Culture Planning; Johannes Schuman, Director Development and Urban Design; and Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development.