

TO: PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMISSION (PRCC)
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE
SUBJECT: **BARNET MARINE PARK PARKING OPTIONS**
PURPOSE: To obtain feedback from PRC Commission and Council for parking management options at Barnet Marine Park.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report “Barnet Marine Park Parking Options”, dated December 5, 2023, be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the spring 2023, staff committed to bring a report to PRC Commission to present potential options and seek feedback on how to proceed with the parking management at Barnet Marine Park. Prior to developing the options further, staff are seeking Commission’s feedback on whether to pursue a:

1. Pay Parking Program; or
2. Free Pre-Registered Parking Program; or
3. Status Quo - Existing Parking Program

Depending on the feedback, City staff then seek Council’s direction on a proposed two-year pilot project, commencing 2024. Once the pilot program has been completed, staff will report back with the results of the program.

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), Healthy Community Policy (1991), and the Benefits Based Approach (2023).

2.0 BACKGROUND

Barnet Marine Park (“the Park”) is a popular recreational destination located on the shores of 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 vehicles, leading to significant parking lot demand, which can reach up to 1,000 vehicles per day.

The Park features three parking lots, providing a total of 450 parking stalls. **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 provide 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 program 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.

During peak times, congestion within 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.

To manage vehicle and pedestrian crowding at the Park access routes and entrances during peak periods, City staff and RCMP are often on-site to manage demand. However, the parking lots reach full capacity at 11 a.m. on peak days, which has led to the deployment of two changeable electronic signs located at the east and west entrances of Barnet Road that will display "Lots Full." Despite these notifications, traffic congestion and queuing along Barnet Road persists as vehicles continue to circulate the lots in search of vacant parking stalls. To manage the overflow and mitigate safety risks associated with driver frustration, PRC staff, Bylaw officers, and RCMP are required to manage traffic and ensure on-site safety.

A Barnet Marine Park Master Plan is planned for 2024, with expected completion in 2025

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

Potential options for the management of the parking lot in 2024 and ahead of any findings from the Master Plan include:

- 1. Pay Parking Program; or
- 2. Free Pre-Registered Parking Program; or
- 3. Status Quo - Existing Parking Program

3.1 Option 1: Pay Parking Program.

This option proposes a cost recovery parking program to help manage parking at Barnet Marine Park. This option will provide management of the parking lots through pay parking, using on-site parking stations and parking apps. This program is to act as a demand management strategy during peak periods to encourage a higher visitor turnover rate. In addition, there can be flexibility in the rate structure, for example, time limits during the winter season and pay parking during the summer peak season.

This option is similar to pay parking used at high-demand Coquitlam Parks, Metro Vancouver Regional Parks (Sasamat Lake & Lynn Headwater), West Vancouver Parks, White Rock Beach, Vancouver Parks and Harrison Hot Springs.

Pros and Cons

Pros:

- *Revenue Generation:* One of the primary benefits of pay parking is the potential for revenue generation. PRC can use this revenue to fund maintenance, infrastructure improvements, and conservation efforts, reducing the burden on taxpayers;
- *Encourages Parking Turnover:* Charging for parking with time limits on parking spaces encourages turnover, which results in more people getting a chance to use the parking spots throughout the day. This can help prevent a few vehicles from monopolizing the parking spaces for extended periods;
- *Creates Fairness:* Flexibility in the rate structure can create fairness for everyone;
- *Creates Availability for New Visitors:* With pay parking, people are less likely to occupy spaces for unnecessary lengths of time, ensuring that spots become available for new visitors;
- *Improves Safety:* Pay parking can lead to less overcrowding of vehicles in parking lots. With less traffic congestion, there are less safety concerns for vehicles and pedestrians; and
- *Sustainability:* Pay parking can encourage alternative transportation options, such as carpooling or using public transportation, which can reduce the environmental impact of vehicle emissions.

Cons:

- *Access Barriers:* Charging for parking can create barriers to access for low-income individuals and families who may not be able to afford the additional cost, potentially limiting Park visitation for those who need it most;
- *Equity Concerns:* Pay parking can be seen as inequitable, as it may disproportionately affect marginalized communities and discourage diverse participation in outdoor activities;
- *Visitor Dissatisfaction:* Some visitors may be dissatisfied with having to pay for parking, which can lead to negative reviews and public backlash against the Park management;
- *Overcrowding in Nearby Areas:* Charging for parking in the Park can lead to increased parking in nearby residential areas as visitors look for free parking options, potentially causing inconvenience for residents;
- *Environmental Impact:* If the parking fees do not effectively reduce Park visitation, pay parking could lead to increased vehicular traffic and associated environmental impacts;
- *Complexity:* Implementing and managing a pay parking program can be complex, requiring investment in technology and a clear pricing structure;

- *Administrative Costs:* A pay parking program involves an annual cost to the City for implementing parking enforcement staff such as City Bylaw officers, and during peak times traffic control personnel may still be required;
- *Implementation Costs:* Implementation costs include the cost of parking meters or parking stations.

3.2 Option 2: Free Pre-Registered Parking Program

This non-cost recovery parking program option utilizes free parking program, on a first come basis, for managing parking at Barnet Marine Park. This program is in the form of a reservation system (similar to Buntzen and Joffre Lakes), or seasonal parking times restrictions.

Pros and Cons

Pros:

- *Accessibility:* Free parking makes the Park more accessible to a wider range of people, regardless of their financial situation. This inclusivity allows more individuals and families to enjoy outdoor recreational activities;
- *Promotes Park Visitation:* Free parking can incentivize people to visit the Park, which can contribute to increased awareness of the importance of conservation and the value of outdoor spaces;
- *Improved Visitor Experience:* Reserving parking spaces in advance can enhance the overall visitor experience by reducing the stress of finding parking on arrival;
- *Reduced Congestion:* A reservation system can help distribute visitor arrivals more evenly throughout the day, reducing traffic congestion during peak hours;
- *Environmental Benefits:* By reducing congestion and idling time, the reservation system can contribute to lower carbon emissions and improved air quality;
- *Associated Services:* While the reservation system may be free for visitors, it can also provide associated services like shuttle rides from nearby facilities;.
- *Data Collection:* The system can collect valuable data on visitor patterns, which can be used for Park management and future planning.

Cons:

- *Overcrowding:* Barnet Marine Park attracts many people from outside Burnaby and free parking often leads to overcrowding in the Park, which can degrade the natural environment, increase traffic congestion, and reduce the overall enjoyment of visitors;
- *Limited Spontaneity:* Visitors who prefer spontaneous trips to the Park may be discouraged by the need to reserve parking in advance;

- *Technical Challenges:* Implementing and maintaining a reservation system requires technical expertise, including software development and hardware infrastructure;
- *Accessibility Issues:* Not all visitors may have access to the internet or be comfortable using a reservation system, potentially excluding some groups;
- *Overhead Costs:* There are costs associated with setting up and maintaining the reservation system, which may include software licensing, staff training, and customer support;
- *Fairness Concerns:* Managing the allocation of parking spaces fairly and preventing abuse of the system can be challenging;
- *Operational Complexity:* Operating a reservation system can be complex, especially during peak seasons or special events, and may require additional staff;
- *Potential for No-Shows:* Some visitors may make reservations but not show up, leading to under-utilized parking spaces;
- *Infrastructure Requirements:* Implementing the necessary infrastructure (e.g., parking stations, signage) can be costly;

3.3 Option 3: Status Quo - Existing Parking Program

This option continues to use PRCs Existing Program for managing parking at Barnet Marine Park. It involves having the Barnet Marine parking lot managed by Parks staff using Parks staff to direct traffic, Bylaw & RCMP to manage traffic violations and flow.

This level of service for the Status Quo – Existing Parking Program is based on the 2023 budget. If the Council approves the proposed 2024 budget changes, then Barnet Marine Park’s existing parking level of service will need to be adjusted to meet the new budget amounts. The Financial section of this report has further details.

Pros & Cons

Pros:

- *Accessibility:* Free parking makes The Park more accessible to a wider range of people, regardless of their financial situation. This inclusivity allows more individuals and families to enjoy outdoor recreational activities;
- *Promotes Park Visitation:* Free parking can incentivize people to visit the Park, which can contribute to increased awareness of the importance of conservation and the value of outdoor spaces.

Cons:

- *Overcrowding:* Barnet Marine Park attracts many people from outside Burnaby and free parking often leads to overcrowding in the Park, which can degrade the natural environment, increase traffic congestion, and reduce the overall enjoyment of visitors;
- *Environmental Impact:* More vehicles entering the Park due to free parking can result in increased carbon emissions, air pollution, and damage to

ecosystems. It may also lead to the degradation of trails, roads, and other park infrastructure;

- **Equity Concerns:** While free parking can make the Park more accessible, it may not necessarily address broader issues of equity, as the cost of transportation to the Park can still be a barrier for some low-income individuals and families;
- **Administrative Costs:** The existing program involves an annual cost to the City for City Parks staff, RCMP, City Bylaw officers, and Traffic Control personnel;

3.5 Summary:

The following chart summarizes the three options:

Explanation	Option 1: Pay Parking Program	Option 2: Free Pre- Registration Parking Program	Option 3: Status Quo - Existing Parking Program
Is Parking accessible to everyone without a cost to the park users	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are technological challenges a potential barrier to the park user	Yes	Yes	No
Promotes unplanned Park visitations	Yes	No	Yes
Promotes higher visitor satisfaction	No	Yes	Yes
Encourages alternate transportation options (i.e., carpooling)	Yes	Yes	No
Encourages parking turnover	Yes	Yes	No
Reduces parking congestion	Yes	Yes	No
Environmental Benefits: Reduces carbon emissions (based on reduced congestion)	Yes	Yes	No
Other Benefits – Can be used for data collection (i.e., Peak Demand)	Yes	Yes	No
Is there an implementation cost with this option?	Yes	Yes	No
Are staffing resources required to operate this option?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Revenue generation for the City	Yes	No	No

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A communications strategy will be developed to raise awareness about Barnet Marine Park, the proposed parking program, and to notify residents about any parking changes once all program details are finalized. Staff will also continue to work with the City's Communications staff on encouraging alternate modes of transportation to Barnet Marine Park, including carpooling, transit, and cycling.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The operating parking costs are managed through the PRC Operating Budget. The current program had an operating cost of \$250,000 per year. For 2024, Council is considering reducing the annual budget for managing parking at the park to \$100,000. The future estimated annual operating budget will be determined by the parking option that is chosen.

Once feedback from Commission is received, a full capital and operating budget will be presented for Council's consideration when a report is brought forward for their approval.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Barnet Marine Park: 2023 Parking Lot Map

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Steve Bruneau, Director Parks, Andre Kolber, Manager Parks Operations, Mark Riekman, Supervisor Parks Operations, Kathy Ho, Senior Manager Transportation, Engineering.