

Burnaby 2050 Policy Directions

Parks and Open Space

Overview

Burnaby's vast network of parks, open spaces and natural areas are beloved by the community. These spaces inspire Burnaby to play, learn, protect, and connect by creating diverse local experiences in sustainable natural spaces and public places. Parks help make our vibrant community healthier and more beautiful. Access to parks and outdoor recreation amenities is a critical part of a fulfilling life for residents. As Burnaby experiences population growth, demographic shifts and climate change, the parks system must evolve to meet the dynamic needs of all residents.

We need to protect and strategically manage our parks and open spaces for all in our community, so that parks continue to be safe, accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges:

- Maintaining the quantity and quality of park spaces and amenities to meet growing population needs, especially in our Town Centres and Urban Villages.
- Increased and changing demands for outdoor recreational spaces and experiences.
- Climate change is affecting wildlife, plants and water in parks, open spaces and natural areas.
- Aging parks infrastructure requiring maintenance and replacement.
- Maintaining parks as places of physical and emotional safety for all.

Opportunities:

- Focus on clarity of purpose, efforts, and alignment by updating parks and open space policies, funding tools, and bylaws to meet the needs of today's and future residents.
- Implement equitable distribution of parks that focuses on local access for all.
- Connecting with community members who care deeply about parks and are interested in learning about, volunteering at and caring for parks.
- Collaboration with host Nations to manage parks could build stronger relationships and advance reconciliation.

Engagement Findings

- Burnaby residents strongly value access to parks and green spaces, walkability and having a sense of community.
- Community members ranked parks and recreation as the most important part of ensuring Burnaby is a great place to live, work and play.
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- Community members ranked natural areas as the second most important feature to have within walking distance.
- Residents identified parks, green spaces and recreation as the top features to preserve, enhance or change in the city.

Policy Directions

Reconciliation and Parks	
Policy Directions	Why We Are Proposing These Policies
1. Advance reconciliation in the parks system. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with host Nations to develop agreements and protocols for working together on parks. Support cultural practices in public spaces to improve the visibility Indigenous culture in parks. Collaborate and manage natural resources together to build trust and relationships with host Nations. Acquire and manage land with host Nations to preserve archaeological sites. Explore opportunities to engage, learn and share with host Nations. Support Indigenous-led initiatives to incorporate cultural practices, ceremonies and storytelling in parks programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Nations have valuable knowledge about parks and natural areas in Burnaby and can help protect and care for them. • There are places that are historically and culturally important to host Nations in parks.

Environmental Protection	
Policy Directions	Why We Are Proposing These Policies
2. Find ways to use nature to adapt to climate change. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent wildlife habitats and parks from being split up into smaller areas. Create a vision for environmental protection to be used across City departments. Acquire and protect land for parks. Prevent other activities from moving into or using park land. Align with regional plant and wildlife diversity and tree canopy targets. Reduce habitat loss. Restore and enhance native species in parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More coordination over how parks are used will help ensure the environment is protected for future generations. • Nature is often more effective at adapting to climate change than human-made buildings or structures. It's more efficient and cost-effective to protect nature than to try and replace it.

Parks Planning	
Policy Directions	Why We Are Proposing These Policies
<p>3. Develop a new Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify the long-term vision for parks. b) Find a way to create new parks in areas that will have higher population growth. c) Identify the community's short- and medium-term priorities for parks, recreation and culture. d) Develop new standards to ensure all community members can access parks. e) Provide clear timelines for creating new parks and new services. f) Improve the classification and management of different parks services. g) Improve accessibility and safety in parks. h) Update the Park Bylaw. i) Complete an inventory of natural assets, such as trees, wetlands, creeks and more. j) Identify and understand risks to ecosystems and environmentally sensitive areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parks, Recreation and Culture department needs a new plan to guide how parks are developed, managed and protected. • The City needs sustainable funding to create new parks in growing neighbourhoods and maintain older parks. • Since Burnaby's population is growing and there are more pressures to develop park land, the park system needs to be protected so everyone has access to nature and recreation.
<p>4. Find sustainable funding sources to acquire parkland, create new parks and maintain existing parks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider population growth, distribution and needs when planning new parks. b) Create new parks in areas with more population growth. c) Consider new ways to acquire, use and protect land to provide residents with access to parks and open space. d) Update parks in older communities. e) Develop a network of trails across the city. f) Improve collaboration between City departments and with community partners. g) Adapt parks planning to meet changing community needs. 	

<p>5. Develop a policy for parks that balances the impacts of development on parkland so no ecosystems or natural areas are lost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prioritize protecting existing park land. b) Formalize a payment structure for when other activities move onto or use park land. c) Find a way to better understand and meet the need for parks in different neighbourhoods. d) Separate utility and institutional needs from park services. e) Encourage utility development, such as gas and drainage, in non-park land. 	
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Stewardship	
Policy Directions	Why We Are Proposing These Policies
<p>6. Provide learning and volunteer opportunities to the public to create stronger connections to nature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Build and grown interpretive, educational and volunteer programs. b) Provide opportunities and education to help the public and volunteers care for parks. c) Support research on park lands. d) Clarify how research can be done in parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending time in nature is good for people’s health, wellness and social connection. • As Burnaby’s population grows, there will need to be more opportunities for people to access and connect with nature.

Parks Management	
Policy Directions	Why We Are Proposing These Policies
<p>7. Protect, restore and manage park assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Restore damaged habitat and increase the diversity of plants and wildlife. b) Manage invasive species so they don’t spread. c) Re-establish natural ecosystems in recreation areas that aren’t used very much. d) Use operational practices that help restore ecosystems and green infrastructure. e) Monitor and maintain restoration and enhancement efforts, utilizing adaptive management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks provide habitat for wildlife and plants and need to be protected from the impacts of climate change. • Community members value recreation opportunities in parks and want to have safe, high-quality facilities and programs. • Proactively maintaining recreation facilities will avoid expensive repairs or replacements in the future. • Understanding the different types of open spaces in Burnaby will help the City manage them more effectively.

<p>8. Provide high-quality, inclusive visitor experiences with well-maintained facilities and programming that helps build a sense of community.</p>	
<p>9. Develop a consistent approach to how the City classifies, provides and manages open spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop high-quality public and privately-owned open spaces to add to existing parks. b) Balance how people use open spaces with environmental protection. c) Work with other governments and institutions that own parks and open spaces. 	

Glossary

Green Infrastructure: the natural, enhanced, and engineered assets that collectively provide society with ecosystem services required for healthy living (Source: Metro Vancouver).