

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS
FROM: DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE
SUBJECT: **BURNABY MOUNTAIN TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN PHASE 1: KEY FINDINGS REPORT**
PURPOSE: To inform Council of the upcoming work and outline the engagement plan related to the Burnaby Mountain Trail Management Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled “Burnaby Mountain Trail Management Plan Phase 1: Key Findings Report” dated April 29, 2024, be received for information.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

This project aligns with the following City plans and policies: Management Plan for Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area (2000), Environmental Conditions Assessment for Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area (2019), Social Sustainability Strategy (2011), Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016), Climate Action Framework (2019), and Connecting Burnaby – Burnaby Transportation Plan (2021).

2.0 BACKGROUND

Burnaby Mountain is a popular 578-hectare municipal park, with 30 kilometres of trail network that is continually evolving. The park has a conservation covenant with development restrictions to protect this environmentally sensitive area and ecosystem. A Trail Master Plan for the Burnaby Mountain is needed to sustainably balance both the protection of the conservation lands and recreational value of the area, both of which face pressure as the city grows. Furthermore, as the recreational uses continue to expand, sustainable management of the trails is critical for long-term sustainability of the park. The Burnaby Mountain Trail Management Plan (BMTMP) is intended to be a practical and actionable document with an implementation strategy to guide trail works and improvements in the park for the next 10 years.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

In 2000, the Management Plan for Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area analyzed and reported on the state of the park. A second study in 2019, provided the Environmental Conditions Assessment and it identified the need for a Trail Management Plan for Burnaby Mountain. The significant increase in trail use showed patterns of use concerning the long-term health of the park. Expanded park use could be tied to

degradation of trees, vegetation, and erosions patterns on the mountain. In 2023, Council approved the creation of a Trail Management Plan to review the options for trail uses, identify multi-use trail and single use trails, and present options for future trail management to ensure habitat protection and sustainable enjoyment of the park for future generations. Staff have now commenced the development of the BMTMP and are providing Council with an update regarding the upcoming work and community engagement plans.

3.1 PROJECT PROCESS

The Burnaby Mountain Trail Management Plan will be undertaken in 4 phases:

- Phase 1: Key Findings - Literature Review, Site Analysis and Photo Documentation (Completed);
- Phase 2: Visioning – Community engagement, option exploration (Spring/Summer 2024);
- Phase 3: Draft Trail Management Plan (Fall 2024);
- Phase 4: Final Trail Management Plan (Winter 2025; and
- Phase 5: Implementation Strategy (Spring 2025).

Phase 1 is now completed and the Key findings and technical documents (Attachment 1) are publicly available on the project web page and are summarised below.

Background and Field Review:

The condition of trails on Burnaby Mountain varies significantly depending on the trail type. Common issues across the study area included erosion, pooling water, invasives management, significant areas of exposed roots, and need for infrastructure improvements such as bridges, boardwalks, signage, and application of trail standards.

The mountain bike and hiking trails located on the southeast side of the study were observed to contain more issues than other areas, likely due to their steep and technical terrain and mountain bike traffic. In addition, several wider multi-use pathways, such as the Trans Canada Trail, have recently been refurbished. In general, multi-use pathways through the study area were found to be in relatively good condition.

Environmental Overview:

The Environmental Overview is an assessment of the valued components and natural assets that make up the park and help guide how best to protect and manage the natural habitat. Conservation should be prioritized to sustainably and responsibly manage the natural assets for years to come.

The valued components are considered in this environmental overview include vegetation, geology and soils, surface water and fisheries resources, groundwater,

wildlife, species at risk, cultural resources, archaeology, health and safety, and noise. The biggest threat to the identified species-at-risk and their associated habitats within the park is trail and soil erosion.

Four key recommendations from the Environmental Overview are outlined below:

1. Regular Maintenance
 - Erosion Control
 - Vegetation Buffer
 - Bridges and Boardwalks

2. Invasive Species Management and Eradication
 - Invasive species control
 - Invasive species management plan

3. Temporary Closure of Trails for Restoration
 - Nesting and breeding protection

4. Increased Fences and Park Presence
 - Regular inspections
 - Public outreach and education
 - Water quality protection
 - Trail management
 - Sensitive habitat preservation

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The key objectives of community engagement for this project are to:

- Development of a clear vision for the park and its trails;
- Reach the desired equilibrium between conservation needs and recreational demands;
- Strengthen communication and relationships with park users; and
- Develop a clear and achievable list of park improvements to guide a sustainable infrastructure improvement workplan for the next 10 years.

Project communication and community engagement efforts have been created to address both the general public and targeted user groups:

- Public information will be posted on a project page on the City website;
- A public survey will be available through the project page from May 1, 2024, to June 2, 2024;
- An Open House hosted at Simon Fraser University (SFU) on May 21, 2024;
- Specific engagement with interested parties including SFU, Burnaby Mountain Biking Association, UniverCity Community Association, Host Nations and other local environmental stewardship groups.

At the April 16, 2024 staff also provided the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee with a summary of the Key Findings Report and gathered additional feedback regarding the BMTMP.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The work to establish the BMTMP is fully funded in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan. No additional funds are required for the study.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Gonzalez, Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Burnaby Mountain Trail Management Plan Presentation

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Angela Zhuo, Senior Planner PRC, with input from Heather Edwards, Manager Parks Planning Design and Development; Andre Isakov, Director Parks, Recreation and Culture Planning; Steve Bruneau, Director Parks.