

TO: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (PDC)
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND
CULTURE
SUBJECT: **BC PARKWAY BOUNDARY TO ROYAL OAK FRAMEWORK PLAN**
PURPOSE: To seek Council approval of the BC Parkway Boundary to Royal Oak
Framework Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Framework Plan, as outlined in the report titled “BC Parkway Boundary to Royal Oak Framework Plan” dated April 9, 2025, be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 24, 2023, Council authorized staff to develop a detailed urban design plan for the Metrotown portion of the BC Parkway Boundary to Royal Oak (Framework Plan), including advancing discussions with TransLink, BC Hydro, and other authorities to implement the plan over a number of years. The Framework Plan is a guideline document which sets out the long-term vision for developing the corridor, proposes a high-level concept for the project area, and suggests implementation priorities. The Framework Plan is segmented into six distinct character zones including:

- **Burnaby Gateway** - between Boundary Road and Kingsway
- **Central Park** - between Kingsway and Patterson SkyTrain Station
- **Patterson East** - between Patterson SkyTrain Station and Willingdon Avenue
- **Metrotown Station** - between Willingdon Avenue and Metrotown SkyTrain Station
- **Bonsor South** - between Metrotown SkyTrain Station and Central Boulevard
- **Royal Oak Station** - between Jubilee Avenue and Royal Oak SkyTrain Station

The Framework Plan proposes a number of interactive elements from fitness circuits to pet play areas to engage both the Metrotown Community, as well as BC Parkway users. Implementation of the proposed concepts within the Framework Plan are subject to funding availability, as capital improvements are currently unbudgeted and not included in the Development Cost Charge (DCC) program. It also requires approval from other parties with an interest over the lands, and alignment with adjacent projects.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

This project aligns with the following City plans and policies:

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

2.0 BACKGROUND

BC Parkway (“the Parkway”) is a 26-kilometer cycling and pedestrian corridor that extends from False Creek in Vancouver, through Burnaby, to the New Westminster Quay. The Parkway corridor is owned by BC Hydro with several utilities and services of regional entities including TransLink, which operates the Expo SkyTrain Line and the BC Parkway pedestrian and cycling greenway. Recognizing the Parkway’s significance within 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 corridor with Beresford Street and Central Boulevard to support the establishment of a connected, accessible, and active Downtown.

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 Parkway corridor.

An initial information report to Council on July 10, 2023 outlined the proposed scope and the process for the project. Funding for proposed scope was received on December 2023 and the project commenced on January 13, 2024.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of the project is to create exceptional public spaces that would transform Downtown Metrotown with a unique sense of place and character, while providing residents with functional and fun gathering places, as well as a means to coordinate civic investments within Parkway area.

Between January to December 2024, the project was carried out in two phases: Phase 1 – Public Awareness and Community Engagement, and Phase 2 - Development of a long-term plan (Framework Plan) to guide the future development of the project area.

The scope of the project is to identify potential public realm improvements of the BC Parkway between Boundary Road and the Royal Oak SkyTrain Station. The project area is shown in Figure 1. It is noted that the construction, maintenance and operation of the multi-use path and ancillary infrastructure in the corridor are the jurisdiction of TransLink and have been excluded from the Framework Plan’s scope.



Figure 1: Project Area- Boundary Road to Royal Oak SkyTrain Station

Phase 1- Public Awareness and Community Engagement

Public engagement was held twice during 2024 to inform on the development of the Framework Plan. Details of the two public engagement processes are further described in Section 4 of this report.

To raise public awareness and to introduce the concept of the corridor as a valuable public space, a series of temporary activation programs to animate the space were undertaken in Summer 2023 and 2024. The Summer 2023 programs included the area outside Patterson SkyTrain Station. Building on this, the programs expanded to include Metrotown SkyTrain Station in 2024. Approximately 7,000 people participated in 26 temporary events over a three-month period between June to August 2024. The consultation summary report for the two public engagements is included in Attachment 2 and 3.

Activation programs will continue in 2025 to enhance public use of the Parkway as implementation of the Framework Plan will be on hold until funding is available. Public feedback from programming in Summer 2023 and 2024 will continue to be integrated to refine and shape ongoing programming, in order to best reflect community needs.

3.1 Phase 2 – Development of Framework Plan

The Framework Plan in Attachment 1 is a guideline document which sets out the long-term vision for developing the corridor, proposes a high-level concept for the project area, and suggests implementation priorities.

The parkway corridor is envisioned as six distinctive zones. Each zone has a proposed concept developed from public feedback, supplemented by site analysis and the consideration of current and future adjacent uses. Should Council wish to advance the proposed concepts contained within the Framework Plan, feasibility

would need to be confirmed through a detailed design stage for each zone, with necessary approvals obtained from all concerned parties and the landowner (BC Hydro). Host Nation and general public feedback will continue to inform detailed design concepts.

The sections below provide a summary of the Framework Plan and highlight the key components proposed for each zone. Ancillary infrastructure that supports these major components, for example water fountains, restrooms, etc., will be considered at the detailed design phase. Naming of the zones below are placeholders, and formal naming of the project area will be considered as part of a future phase.

3.1.1 Zones

- **Burnaby Gateway** is the section of the corridor between Boundary Road and Kingsway. As the entry point to the City from Vancouver, features that could contribute to a welcoming environment such as lighting and signage are proposed. Works in this section require coordination with TransLink, which is currently undertaking a feasibility study to improve the multi-use path from Joyce SkyTrain Station to Patterson SkyTrain Station.
- **Central Park** is the section of the corridor between Kingsway and west of Patterson SkyTrain Station. To emphasize the significance of the entrance to Central Park, it is proposed that the historic Central Park gate be reinstated, including the wrought iron arch. The existing natural environment could be enhanced by incorporating native plant species and improving the rain garden and stormwater drainage features to serve as a key element for biodiversity. A new plaza around Patterson SkyTrain Station is proposed to connect Central Park north and south, providing spill-over space during large-scale events, and functioning as a year-round social space.
- **Patterson East** is the section of the corridor east of Patterson SkyTrain Station to west of Willingdon Avenue. Transitioning from the quiet Central Park to residential zone, this zone provides opportunities for light recreation activities such as outdoor fitness, community gardens, and a potential pet play area. These components together could create an informal “outdoor living room” to serve nearby high-rise residents.
- **Metrotown Station** is the section of the corridor east of Willingdon Avenue to Metrotown SkyTrain Station. A hardscaped area that could be used for a multitude of activities is proposed, supporting temporary events or small-scale commercial, while accommodating the heavy concentration of pedestrians within this area.

Development of this zone would be dependent on the future development of the Metropolis site, the planning of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route, and the potential location of the future bus interchange. Permanent features that would showcase the area as a significant hub, such as water features and public art, could be considered once the timing for the design and construction of these adjacent projects is confirmed.

- **Bonsor South** is the section of the corridor between Metrotown SkyTrain Station east entrance to Central Boulevard. The proposed concept proposes three distinct pockets accommodating small-scale sports courts and light recreational activities, as well as an open lawn to provide a fun and informal recreation space. These pockets act as connecting spaces that can be complimentary to the programs offered at the Bonsor Recreation Centre and the youth hub and Maywood School.
- **Royal Oak Station** is the section of the corridor between Jubilee Avenue and west of Royal Oak SkyTrain Station and is within the Royal Oak Community Plan area. In recognition of the future population growth anticipated by the Royal Oak Community Plan, concepts for this area include outdoor recreation spaces, open lawns, children's playgrounds, pet play areas and public art to meet future community needs. The proposed concepts within this zone also align with TransLink's detailed design for revitalization of the existing multi-use path between Imperial Street and Buller Avenue, which is tentatively scheduled to commence construction in 2026.

3.2 Implementation

Implementation of the Framework Plan is subject to available funding, approval from other parties with an interest over the lands, and alignment with other adjacent projects. The Parkway is not included as a capital project in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan, therefore advancing any implementation would require the allocation of new funds. The section below describes at a high level the potential sequencing of implementation, should funding become available.

3.2.1 Phasing Plan

The phasing plan is grouped into 3 categories based on ease of implementation and timing with other adjacent projects.

1st Order Implementation: Patterson East, Bonsor South, Royal Oak Station

In no specific sequence, each of these areas could be implemented as a first priority. These zones have less encumbrances compared to other zones and would provide amenities that currently do not exist in Metrotown.

Bonsor South - The design and construction of this zone is not contingent on coordination with any current adjacent major projects which would support earlier phasing. However, it is noted that the future redevelopment of Bonsor Park may influence the development of this zone.

Royal Oak Station - Construction of TransLink's multi-use path upgrade project between TransLink's Imperial Street and Buller Avenue is anticipated to start in 2026. Accordingly, improvements to the Royal Oak SkyTrain Station zone could be advanced earlier in coordination with TransLink's detailed design work.

Patterson East – Due to a lower intensity of users, adjacent development, and projects in the area, this zone presents fewer development constraints than other parts of the corridor. Apart from the plaza which requires coordination with the redevelopment of Central Park north, the development of the remaining section of the Patterson East zone is not contingent on the timing of other adjacent projects and could be advanced earlier.

2nd Order Implementation: Burnaby Gateway, Central Park

The development of the Burnaby Gateway and Central Park zone is contingent on a number of adjacent projects, including Phase 2 of the Telus Boot development at 3777 Kingsway, and TransLink's planned upgrade of the multi-use path from Joyce SkyTrain Station to Patterson SkyTrain Station. Detailed design and construction timing of these other projects are yet to be determined.

3rd Order Implementation: Metrotown Station

Development of the Metrotown Station zone is contingent on a number of interconnected projects which currently do not have confirmed timing for detailed design or construction. This includes the redevelopment of Metropolis, the planning of the R2 Rapid Bus extension to Metrotown Station, and the potential redevelopment of a regional transit interchange at this location.

The Metropolis redevelopment is currently preparing a draft Master Plan for advancement. The redevelopment of the regional transit interchange is also subject to future feasibility study to determine the overall bus and rapid transit requirements in the Metrotown Town Centre. As such, creating temporary spaces in this zone is a suitable alternative to maximize the utilization of this high visibility area while waiting for adjacent projects to advance.

3.2.2 Temporary Activations

As the implementation of the proposed concepts within the Framework Plan are subject to funding availability and will occur over multiple years, temporary programming is proposed as an interim measure to enhance public enjoyment of the Parkway. This includes developing flexible

temporary spaces that can accommodate a variety of activities. The 2025 programming activations of Parkway Alive are part of the 2025 one-time budget requests.

Beyond funding for the construction of these temporary spaces, additional staff resources and partnerships with community groups are necessary to support a diverse range of programs that reflect the community's needs, and to encourage more community-led initiatives. Community capacity building is also critical to the successful delivery of such projects, leveraging collaborations with community art and business groups, as well as major landowners, among others, to foster engagement and long-term stewardship of these spaces.

3.3 Approvals from other parties

Several utilities and infrastructure assets are located within the project area, including those owned and operated by Fortis BC, Telus, Rogers, Metro Vancouver, BC Hydro and TransLink. Formal approvals from these utilities will be required prior to project implementation, which can only be obtained once detailed design has been advanced and technical assessments are available.

3.3.1 BC Hydro

In addition to the permission to locate structures close to its assets, BC Hydro as the landowner of the corridor will also require the City to enter into a general land lease for the use of the corridor, as well as specific leases for temporary programs. Longer-term leases for the placement of more permanent infrastructure will be subject to future negotiation with BC Hydro should this project proceed to implementation.

3.3.2 TransLink

TransLink has a master license agreement with BC Hydro for the construction, operation and maintenance of its assets within the parkway corridor. While TransLink has been coordinating with staff on its projects and are aware of the proposed concepts, further formal approval from TransLink is needed at the detail design stage for each of the concepts to ensure there is no disturbance to its assets.

3.3.3 Memorandum of Understanding

It is proposed that the City enter into a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BC Hydro and TransLink. The MOU is a legally non-binding document that expresses the parties interests and understanding in exploring the potential of implementing the Framework Plan for public use. Other future agreements would be required should the project proceed to implementation.

3.3.4 First Nations

Staff engaged with Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation on the development of the Framework Plan and will continue to engage with all Host Nations during future potential design and construction phases. Comments from the Host Nations received to date have been incorporated into the Framework Plan.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The first round of public engagement was held between April 8 and April 28, 2024, with an objective to seek public feedback on needs and priorities for the corridor. Over 1,000 responses were received. The key themes that emerged from this public engagement shaped the vision and the concepts of the Framework Plan.

A second round of public engagement, held between September 19 to October 14, 2024, sought public feedback on the Framework Plan. Over 200 responses were received. The proposed concepts were amended to reflect the responses received. The consultation summary of these two public engagements can be found on the project webpage and in Attachments 2 and 3.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed 2025-2029 Financial Plan includes \$250,000 through One-Time funding for Parkway Alive, which supports activation in 2025. The potential capital improvements outlined in the Framework Plan will require substantial long-term investment. These capital improvements are not included in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan and are also not included the Development Cost Charge (DCC) program.

The construction of such valuable and critical urban parkways requires dedicated staff resources and strong partnerships with community groups to support diverse programming that reflects Burnaby's community needs. Capacity building is also essential to the successful delivery of these projects, leveraging collaborations with community art and business groups, as well as major landowners, among others, to foster engagement and ensure long-term stewardship of these spaces.

The BC Parkway presents a unique opportunity for potential partnerships with other levels of government, community groups and/or private organizations. The development, construction, and operation of a project like this could be funded through a diversified model leveraging public-private partnerships, nonprofit stewardship, corporate sponsorships and naming rights, developer contributions, government grants, and community-driven initiatives. Examples of other similar projects, such as The High Line (New York), The Bentway (Toronto), and The Underline (Miami), demonstrate successful funding approaches that leverage various partnerships. While the city has historically directly operated amenities like the Parkway, long-term operational sustainability could be realized through other operating models, including partnerships with non-profits or Business Improvement Associations (BIA). The ultimate implementation of the Plan would require a robust financial framework that minimizes

the fiscal burden on the municipality, which can likely only be achieved through partnerships.

Recognizing that there is no available funding in the current five-year Financial Plan, staff will not undertake further planning or initiation of the Framework Plan. Should Council wish to initiate any portion of the Plan, staff would report back and outline the funding required to support this work.

Respectfully submitted,

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Framework Plan
Attachment 2 - Consultation Summary
Attachment 3 - Engagement Round 2 Summary

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Charlene Liew, Senior Planner, and reviewed by Alex Kolsteren, Planner 2, Johannes Schuman, Director Community Planning, Andre Isakov, Director Parks Planning, Carl Isaak, Director Neighbourhood Planning and Urban Design.