

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER LANDS AND FACILITIES
SUBJECT: **BIKE PLAYGROUND**
PURPOSE: To seek Council direction to advance planning of a bike playground.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT staff be provided directions on the preferred approach, scale and funding support to advance planning of a bike playground in Burnaby, as outlined in the report titled "Bike Playground" dated May 27, 2025; and

THAT staff be directed to undertake a needs assessment and feasibility study, including community engagement and partnership exploration, at approximate cost of \$50,000 plus GST and report back with recommendations.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

A bike playground or traffic garden aligns with several of the City of Burnaby's key strategic priorities by promoting safe, active transportation and fostering early education around road safety. Specifically, such a facility supports the following City initiatives, such as Burnaby Transportation Plan, Greenways Master Plan, and Climate Action Framework.

2.0 BACKGROUND

This report is to respond to Council's motion on January 27, 2025, directing staff to explore the establishment of a bike playground in the City of Burnaby. The proposed facility would provide a safe, dedicated space where children can learn to ride bicycles and develop road safety skills in an environment that simulates real-world urban infrastructure.

The report outlines existing infrastructure and programs in Burnaby that support cycling education, as well as examples from other municipalities. It highlights potential scales of implementation, delivery models, and community partnership opportunities. To proceed effectively, foundational questions must be addressed, such as defining the project's vision and selecting the most suitable traffic garden model, as each type presents different benefits and resource needs.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

Bike playgrounds, also known as traffic gardens, have been used locally, nationally and internationally for nearly a century to promote road safety and encourage active

transportation. These purpose-built environments replicate small-scale street features such as roundabouts, crosswalks, and bike lanes in a safe, car-free setting, helping develop more advanced bike handling skills like stopping and starting, turning in multiple directions, etc. They offer children a fun and engaging way to understand the “rules of the road” and to develop road safety skills while promoting physical activity through play.

While the potential benefits align with the City’s long-term objectives, public consultation, engagement and further assessment would be necessary to determine the level of interest and demand in the community.

3.1 Bike Safety Programming

There are currently no permanent, City-led programs dedicated specifically to experiential road safety learning. The City’s engineering department provides partial funding for *Learn2Ride* program, which is delivered by HUB Cycling to Grade 4–5 students in Burnaby schools that applied to the program. The program aims to teach basic bike handling and traffic skills in temporary setups like schoolyards or parking lots (Bike Rodeos or temporary traffic garden).

Currently, the City does not have resources allocated to run these types of programs directly. Any new initiative would require dedicated funding.

There are some private, non-profit, and public organizations currently active in the Metro Vancouver region that deliver road safety, cycling education, or youth programs.

If the City were to develop bike safety programs, potential partners and collaborators could include HUB Cycling, Burnaby School District (SD41), Burnaby RCMP, ICBC, Fraser Health, and community organizations such as Burnaby Neighbourhood House and the Boys and Girls Clubs.

3.2 Bike Safety Learning Spaces in Burnaby

Two playgrounds in the City feature small-scale paved loop tracks intended for young children (ages 2-6) learning to balance and ride. These loops serve as a model for how existing parks can support early cycling skill development in a fun, safe and low-stress environment. However, the City does not currently offer any learning programs in these spaces.



Sumas Park, Burnaby



Poplar Park, Burnaby

Open street events, such as “Car Free Day” or “Hats Off Day” where roads are closed to traffic, could be a good opportunity for a pop-up or temporary traffic garden, which could be run by organizations like HUB Cycling.

3.3 Potential Project Scales and Cost Ranges

A bike playground or traffic garden can be delivered at various scales, depending on available space, budget, and intended level of programming. Options range from low-cost, temporary installations using paint and portable elements, to fully developed, permanent facilities with built features, landscaping, and ongoing programming capacity. Table 1. Project Scale Options (*Attachment 1*) outlines potential scales of investment, including example features and estimated costs to help guide future planning discussions. Examples of current traffic garden areas are shown in *Attachment 3*.

3.4 Delivery Models and Operating Options

There are several ways the City could deliver and operate a bike playground, depending on the project's scale, objectives, and available resources. The chosen model will influence capital and operating costs, programming scope, and the extent of City involvement. Potential delivery and operating options are listed in *Attachment 2*.

Regardless of the delivery model, key operational factors to address include:

- Staffing: Who will maintain the site and deliver programming (e.g., self-delivered, City staff, contractors, partners)?
- Scheduling: Will the facility be open to the public at all times, or will access be limited to scheduled programming?
- Safety and Risk Management: Clear policies for supervision, equipment use, and emergency response.
- Equity and Inclusion: Ensure the space is accessible and welcoming to children and families of all backgrounds and abilities.

3.5 Next Steps / Recommendations

There are a wide range of options and delivery models available for developing a bike playground, ranging from small, low-cost pilot projects to larger, permanent facilities with ongoing programming. Each option comes with different levels of investment, partnerships, and operational requirements.

To proceed, staff will require funding to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment and feasibility study, as well as clear direction from Council regarding the preferred scale and approach to explore further. This will enable staff to refine planning efforts, carry out detailed evaluations, and engage relevant partners to develop a realistic and community-supported implementation plan.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Subject to Council approval of funds and confirmation of the initiative as a City project, staff will undertake community engagement to better understand local needs and build support and inform the development of the project. Regular updates will be shared with the broader community through the project webpage.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Notice of Motion indicates that \$20,000 in funding has been secured for this initiative through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). This flexible funding, along with an additional \$50,000, is required to support staff time and professional services needed to complete a needs assessment, feasibility study, conceptual design, community engagement, partnership development, cost estimation, and preparation of a comprehensive project plan. Pending Council's approval of the report, staff will need to reallocate funds from one of the Lands & Facilities projects to fund the initiative. Staff will work with organizations and firms such as the Wosk Center for Dialogue to collect grants and reduce costs wherever possible.

This plan will form the basis of a future report to Council, with the goal of incorporating the project into the 2026–2030 Capital Plan. Additional capital investment will be necessary to support the next phase of the initiative—detailed design and construction—which will vary significantly depending on the final scale and scope of the project.

Respectfully submitted,

James Lota, General Manager Lands and Facilities

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 –Table 1. Project Scale Options

Attachment 2 – Delivery and Operation Options

Attachment 3 – Traffic Garden / Bike Playground Examples

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Isabel Londono, Project Manager Civic Projects, and reviewed by Sarah Kosari, Sr. Manager Civic Projects, and Charles Allen, Director Civic Building Projects.