

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: DRAFT PRC PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the draft Making Life Better: Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan, as provided in Attachment 1 of the report titled “Draft PRC Plan”, dated February 25, 2026, of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee, be approved; and

THAT staff be authorized to proceed with the second round of public engagement, as outlined in Section 4.0 of this report.

REPORT

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee, at its meeting held on February 25, 2026, received and adopted the *attached* report to inform and seek feedback on the draft Making Life Better: Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan.

At the meeting, PRC staff provided a presentation summarizing the report and advised of the feedback received at the Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting held on February 24, 2026, where the COTW requested reprioritizing “Action #20” to earlier delivery. The Committee agreed with the change and the Attachment 1 has been updated and provided to this report.

This recommendation is now before Council for final approval.

On behalf of the Parks, Recreation and
Culture Committee,

Councillor D. Tetrault
Chair

Councillor J. Wang
Vice Chair

TO: PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE (PRCC)
FROM: DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE
SUBJECT: **DRAFT PRC PLAN**
PURPOSE: To inform and seek feedback on the draft Making Life Better: Parks, Recreation, and Culture Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the draft Making Life Better: Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan as provided in Attachment 1 of the report, “Draft PRC Plan”, dated February 25, 2026, be approved; and

THAT staff be authorized to proceed with the second round of public engagement as outlined in Section 4.0 of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City’s last comprehensive plan for parks and recreation was adopted in 1984. Since then, Burnaby has grown significantly, and Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) services have expanded to include cultural spaces and programming. The draft *Making Life Better: Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan* (the “Plan”) responds to this change. It sets a clear, long-range direction for PRC services, establishes service level targets across fifteen service areas, and identifies priority actions to guide future investment and decision-making. The Plan is now entering its final confirmation phase, which includes PRCC, Council and public review prior to refining the final Plan.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The *Making Life Better: Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan* (the “Plan”) aligns with the following City plans and policies:

- Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan (2025)
- Urban Forest Strategy (2025)
- Burnaby Strategic Plan (2022)
- Park Prioritization Framework (2023)
- Benefits Based Approach (2024)
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016)
- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011)
- Burnaby Parks and Recreation Master Plan (1984)

2.0 BACKGROUND

At the PRCC meeting on January 28, 2026, Committee received the report titled “SU: PRC Plan: Phase 3,” in which staff provided an update on the progress towards the Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) long-range planning project. An updated *Phase 2 What We Heard Report* was shared with PRCC that includes the findings from the Community group engagement, conversations with Host Nations and additional youth engagement conducted since fall 2025.

2.1 How We Got Here

Burnaby’s last city-wide plan for parks and recreation was completed 42 years ago. Since that time, the city’s population has grown, land use has intensified, and expectations for public spaces have changed. PRC services now include a broader range of facilities, programs, and cultural offerings than were envisioned in 1984.

Community engagement undertaken through the Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan, the 2026 Budget Engagement and the first phase of this project confirms that residents place a high value on parks, recreation, and culture. These services are consistently identified as central to quality of life in Burnaby.

At the same time, rapid growth has increased pressure on PRC assets. Attendance across the system reached a record high in 2025. Many parks, facilities and programs operate at or near capacity, and aging infrastructure continues to require significant reinvestment.

The first round of engagement for the Plan identified several recurring challenges, including limited capacity and crowding, uneven awareness and access, mismatches between services and community interests, aging facilities, and ongoing financial pressures.

The draft Plan responds to these challenges by setting a clear and coordinated long-range direction. Its focus is not only on meeting current demand, but on ensuring that PRC services remain resilient, equitable and financially sustainable over the long term.

2.2 Project Timeline

The project follows a phased approach like other recent projects such as the Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan.

Phase 1: Key Findings (Completed)

Following the project launch in early 2025, staff completed a comprehensive review of PRC services, programs, facilities and gaps in access. Discussions with PRCC on values and priorities for PRC services at the April 17 and June 19, 2025, meetings informed the Key Findings report which was presented to Committee on October 16, 2025. Council and PRCC identified core values for PRC service delivery, which were later confirmed through public engagement in the next phase.

Phase 2: Visioning (Completed)

The Visioning phase focused on understanding community values, needs and

priorities. Engagement was approached through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens that included a statistically valid phone survey, an open online survey, in-person events, and discussions with Host Nations, community groups, PRCC and Council. Staff presented a What We Heard report to PRCC on October 16, 2025, followed by a COTW workshop on November 5, 2025, where Council confirmed service areas for maintaining or increasing service levels.

Phase 3: Drafting (Completed)

Following Council and PRCC direction, staff prepared the draft Plan (Attachment 1). The draft translates research findings and community input into a clear set of strategic directions, including service level targets and a supporting Action Plan.

Phase 4: Confirming (In Progress)

Now moving into Phase 4, staff are seeking feedback from PRCC to refine the draft Plan. A second round of public engagement is proposed this spring to confirm the direction set out in the draft Plan.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The draft Plan is designed to be concise, practical, and easy to use. It provides clear direction for PRC services and establishes a framework to guide future capital and operating decisions. By setting priorities and service level targets, the Plan supports better decision-making, more efficient use of resources and improved long-term financial outcomes.

3.1 Draft Plan overview

The Plan sets out a clear vision for PRC services guided by five key values:

- adaptability,
- evidence-based decision-making,
- community focus,
- equity, and
- financial sustainability.

Its vision is to enhance quality of life for everyone in Burnaby while balancing current service expectations with the long-term viability of facilities and programs.

The Plan outlines key system-wide challenges, establishes an overall approach for Parks, Recreation and Culture, and provides a roadmap for maintaining or enhancing service levels across 15 service areas.

A central feature of the Plan is the service wheel, which presents a snapshot of current and future service levels. The service wheel establishes a clear benchmark for where services are today and where they are intended to go. These targets reflect public expectations, Council direction and the guiding values of the Plan, supporting decision making for future investments and allocating resources.

Parks Approach

The Plan proposes increasing service levels over time for Developed Parks, Urban Forestry and Natural Areas, and Outdoor Recreation and Trails, with a focus on improving neighbourhood-level services and replacing outdated amenities. It maintains current service levels, with targeted improvements, for Outdoor Sports and Horticulture.

Recreation Approach

Over the next five years, the Plan prioritizes the successful opening, staffing and programming of three new major recreation facilities: the Cameron Community Centre and Library, Burnaby Lake Recreation Centre and Brentwood Community Centre. It also provides guidance for addressing aging facilities such as Bonsor Recreation Complex and the recreation facilities at Confederation Park in future planning cycles.

Recognizing significant investments already underway, the Plan maintains service levels for all Recreation service areas which include Arenas, Aquatics, Community Spaces, Golf and Food, and Physical Activity and Well-being.

Culture approach

Understanding that a more in-depth Culture strategy is needed, the Plan maintains the service levels for all Culture service areas (Creation, Presentation and Collections, Festivals and Special Events, Film Production, Lifelong Learning, and Public Art) while focusing on strengthening partnerships, supporting a vibrant local culture ecosystem and continuing to deliver high-quality and distinctive offerings.

3.1 Action Plan

The draft Plan includes an Action Plan that translates strategic direction into clear, prioritized actions. Each action identifies the affected service area, timing, high-level cost estimate, and leading and supporting departments responsible for the action item.

Actions are organized along a planning cycle that reflects service readiness and sequencing. This approach supports efficient implementation and helps avoid premature or fragmented investments. The planning cycle includes understanding needs, setting direction, preparing to deliver, testing and delivering initiatives, and monitoring and improving outcomes.

The Action Plan includes 25 actions spanning short, medium, and long-term horizons. Ten short-term actions focus on immediate priorities, including opening the three new recreation facilities, improving infrastructure for special events, developing service-specific strategies and standards (such as a culture strategy, sports field strategy and Parks design, construction and operating standards), updating bylaws, piloting pop-up exhibitions and performances, strengthening partnerships and advancing equitable access and affordability.

3.2 Next Steps

The project is approximately three-quarters complete and entering **Phase 4: Confirming**. Staff are now presenting the draft Plan to PRCC to seek feedback and endorsement to consult the public prior to Council authorization. Subject to Council direction at the March 10, 2026, regular meeting, staff will proceed with the second round of public engagement. Engagement findings will be reported back to PRCC at the April 22, 2025, meeting and will inform final revisions. Staff anticipate bringing the final Plan to PRCC and Council for approval by late spring 2026.

Phase 5: Implementation is expected to begin in summer 2026 following Plan adoption. Staff propose annual reviews that monitor and track the Action Plan progress, with incremental updates every five years aligned with the Official Community Plan and more comprehensive updates every 10 to 15 years.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is important to acknowledge the ongoing review, feedback and support of the staff PRC Plan Steering Committee, whose guidance has helped shape this Plan and align it with broader corporate objectives, the PRCC, community partners, volunteer groups, and the public. Their input has been invaluable in bringing the Plan to a strong, well-aligned draft.

The second round of public engagement is planned for March 2026 and will focus on validating the draft Plan. Engagement methods will include:

- Self-guided stations with questionnaires at libraries and recreation facilities;
- A public online survey available on the project webpage;
- Four focus groups aiming to include a demographic representation of the public, with two sessions emphasizing participation with youth and immigrant groups;
- Four conversations with seniors' societies in each quadrant;
- Three workshop sessions with interested parties including sports, youth, cultural and other non-profit organizations; and
- Four drop-in open houses in each quadrant, along with one online virtual open house session.

Communications will build on the approach used in the first phase, including information postcards mailed out to all Burnaby residences, digital and print promotion at City facilities, social media, City platforms, and third-party channels. Host Nations referral processes will continue in coordination with Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

Staff will also continue to provide updates to Council and PRCC on key project milestones and anticipate presenting the results from the second round of community engagement at the next PRCC meeting.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The project remains on schedule and within the approved budget, with approximately 80 per cent of the work complete. Most project costs have already been covered through allocated funding from a \$335,000 provincial Local Government Housing Initiative grant, which was required to be fully spent before 2026. The remaining costs have been supported through approved one-time funding of \$102,000 in 2025. The total project cost is estimated at \$550,000. As a result, a one-time funding request for \$115,000 has been included in the draft 2026 – 2030 Financial Plan that is set to be approved by Council in February 2026 to support continued community engagement and completion of the Plan in 2026.

By setting clear priorities and aligning resources, the Plan will guide future investments, improve efficiency, and reduce the need for reactive decision-making. This approach supports long-term financial sustainability and community livability.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Gonzalez, Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Draft Making Life Better: Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by John Musil, Manager, PRC Policy Planning, and reviewed by Andre Isakov, Director, PRC Planning, and the members of the PRC Long-range Plan Steering Committee.