

REPORT

Parks & Recreation

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: March 3, 2025

From: Dean Gibson,
Director of Parks and Recreation
File: 2658753

Item #: 2025-71

Subject: **Parks & Recreation Plan – Council Workshop on Draft Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the draft List of Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions towards a 10-Year Implementation Plan (to 2035) be endorsed for inclusion in the forthcoming updated Parks and Recreation Plan, as outlined in the report titled “Parks and Recreation Plan – Council Workshop on Draft Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions” dated March 3, 2025 from the Director, Parks and Recreation.

PURPOSE

This report provides an overview of the Draft Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions to be included in the updated Parks & Recreation Plan (“the Plan”).

BACKGROUND

At the [City Council Workshop on May 8, 2023](#), Council provided feedback on the Terms of Reference (TOR) which informed a Request for Proposal (RFP) used to retain a consultant team to develop an update that builds on the 2008 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan (PRCP). On [December 11, 2023](#), staff provided an update to inform Council that a consultant team had been selected and that the process to update the 2008 PRCP would be launched in early 2024.

On [March 11, 2024](#), Council provided feedback on the proposed Engagement Strategy to update the Parks & Recreation Plan and endorsed next steps to actively engage the community starting in April 2024.

On [May 13, 2024](#), Council provided input on Parks & Recreation spaces and places as well as programs and services, including strengths and challenges for both outdoor recreation spaces, amenities and programs and indoor recreation facilities and programs. Ideas were also shared towards a vision (aspirations to 2050) and specific to the 10 Year Implementation Plan (to 2035).

On September 26, 2024, staff provided a memo to Council with the [What We Heard Report](#) for Round 1 Engagement (April-June 2024) to update the Parks & Recreation Plan. The memo included a link to the [detailed report](#) as well as [visual summary](#) with an overview of the engagement process and the key learnings (the Visual Summary is included in Attachment B).

DISCUSSION

Following a successful Round 1 Engagement, staff and the consultant team are initiating Round 2 Engagement, scheduled for February-March 2025. This next phase focuses on presenting the draft recommendations formulated from the previous round's community input and the results from a comprehensive data analysis of parks and recreation. By sharing these draft recommendations with the community, staff aim to validate that the recommendations accurately represent the diverse needs, experiences, and interests of residents. Feedback gathered during Round 2 Engagement will help further refine the key recommendations and actions for the updated plan.

The March 3, 2025 Council workshop offers an opportunity to gather Council's feedback on the draft Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions, which will guide the implementation strategy to 2035. The development of the Strategic Directions and Actions was informed by a comprehensive process, including:

- Extensive community input gathered during Round 1 Engagement;
- Data analysis to understand current needs and trends;
- Consideration of the unique context and priorities of the City of New Westminster; and
- Interactive workshops with City Council and internal staff working groups.

The format for the March 3, 2025 interactive Council workshop will be a similar format used to solicit input from interest groups and members of the public for Phase 2 Engagement. The consultant team will facilitate the workshop with the following agenda:

- 1) Welcome and Introductions
- 2) Overview presentation that includes:
 - Purpose of the Workshop
 - Project Context
 - Process to develop the draft Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions
 - i. What We Heard – Round 1 Engagement

- ii. Data analysis
- iii. New Westminster context

3) Council feedback on Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions

Council is requested to provide feedback the on the 11 identified draft Strategic Directions and their corresponding Recommendations and Actions (the detailed list of Actions is provided in Attachment A). Please consider the following:

- 1. How well do these align with Council's priorities for the community?
- 2. Are there any significant gaps in the draft Recommendations or Actions that you would like to see addressed in the updated Plan?
- 3. Do any of the specific draft Recommendations or Actions raise concern?

Strategic Directions	Recommendations
1) Protect existing and acquire additional lands for future parks and open spaces	a. Expand parkland b. Improve protection of existing parks c. Develop new parks
2) Expand, renew and optimize park amenities	a. Prepare a plan for all city and community parks b. Prepare a Long-Term Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy c. Provide new and improved park amenities
3) Expand, renew and maximize use of indoor recreation facilities	a. Improve the performance and use of existing indoor recreation facilities b. Plan and develop new facilities
4) Provide inclusive and equitable opportunities for all	a. Promote equity, access and inclusion b. Support community well-being c. Activate parks and open spaces
5) Advance truth & reconciliation	a. Collaborate with Indigenous communities b. Integrate Indigenous culture and knowledge c. Promote accessibility and inclusion
6) Build resilience and adapt to climate change	a. Enhance climate resilience in parks and open spaces b. Mitigate climate change in park development c. Integrate climate action in design and planning d. Enhance community well-being
	a. Protect natural assets and natural areas

7) Integrate nature and nature-based solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Integrate nature-based solutions into parks and open spaces c. Expand community partnerships
8) Strengthen connections to and within the parks and recreation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhance connectivity between parks and facilities b. Improve connections to and along the riverfront c. Activate the riverfront
9) Improve and expand core services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Manage park and recreation assets b. Diversify and expand programs and services c. Optimize operations
10) Collaborate and formalize partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengthen existing and foster new partnerships and relationships
11) Plan for financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Secure funding b. Manage funding

NEXT STEPS

Following this workshop, the project team will integrate Council's feedback into the comprehensive Engagement Summary for Phase 2. This summary will also incorporate input gathered from diverse interest groups and members of the public through various engagement opportunities (a detailed list can be found on the [Be Heard](#) project page). The completed Engagement Summary will be presented to Council in Spring 2025, and shared with the community via the Be Heard project page. Upon completion of the summary, the consultant team will commence Phase 3: Final Report with Recommendations and Implementation Plan. This final report is anticipated to be finalized by June/July 2025, with a presentation to Council for consideration scheduled for late summer/ early Fall 2025.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2025 - 2029 Capital Plan includes \$320K to complete the Parks and Recreation Plan update.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Interdepartmental collaboration, including liaison between Parks & Recreation staff and the Public Engagement team, as well as input from an interdepartmental Steering

Committee and Staff Works Groups, has informed the development of the draft Strategic Directions, Recommendations, and Actions.

OPTIONS

The following are options for Council's consideration:

1. *THAT the draft List of Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions towards a 10-Year Implementation Plan (to 2035) be endorsed for inclusion in the forthcoming updated Parks and Recreation Plan, as outlined in the report titled "Parks and Recreation Plan – Council Workshop on Draft Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions" dated March 3, 2025 from the Director, Parks and Recreation.*
2. *Provide alternate direction to staff.*

Option #1 is recommended.

CONCLUSION

Through an inclusive, meaningful and engaging process, the PRCP update will better equip the Parks & Recreation Department to effectively address the evolving needs of our growing community. This, in turn, will further advance equity, connectivity, and access to parks and recreation services for all residents.

Attachments:

Attachment A- Draft Strategic Directions, Recommendations and Actions

Attachment B- What We Heard Report (Round 1 Engagement) Visual Summary

This report was prepared by:

James Doan, Manager- Parks Operations and Services

Erika Mashig, Deputy Director-Parks, Policy and Planning

This report was reviewed by:

Dean Gibson, Director- Parks and Recreation

Jennifer Miller, Acting Director, Community Services

This report was approved by:

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer