

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE

Information Bulletin

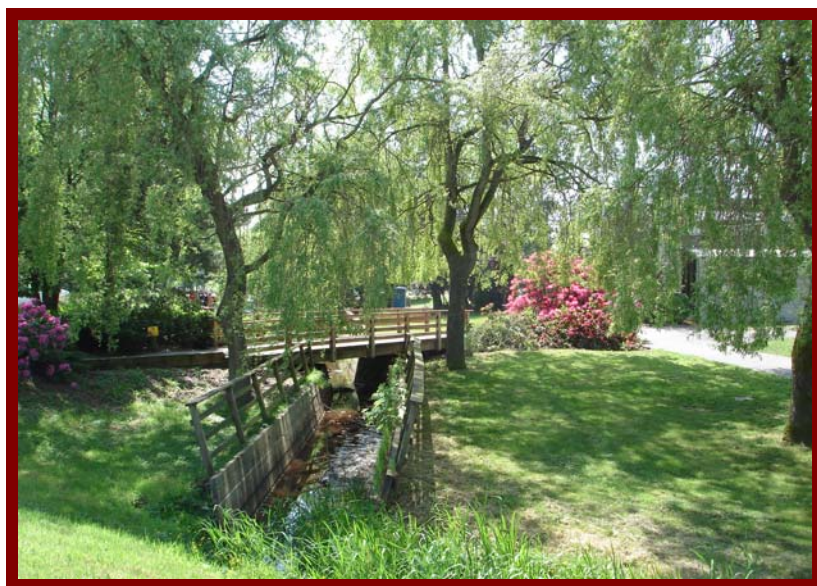
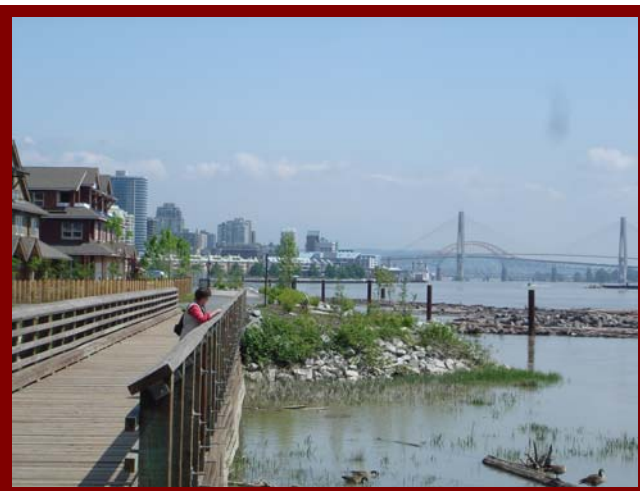
October 2008

Recent growth and change within the Queensborough community has prompted the City to initiate a review of the **Queensborough Community Plan**. The City will be assisted by the consultant firm of UMA. Through this review, the City will ask local residents, property owners, and business owners to share their vision of what Queensborough should be like in the future – and what needs to happen to get there.

PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACE

Queensborough is served with about 17 hectares of parkland. Dedicated parkland includes Ryall Park — a 10 hectare community park anchored by the Queensborough Community Center. An important community gathering place, Ryall boasts both passive open space, and active places including sports fields, a water park, picnic grounds and a children's playground. Neighbourhood parks at the eastern end of the community— Port Royal Park, Community Gardens and Trail—and at the western end of the community Thompson's Landing Park serve the local neighbourhood. Parts of the Perimeter Trail are complete – the portion at Port Royal and between Starlight Casino and Queensborough Landing—and four additional trail segments have been prioritized for construction in 2008. In addition, funds for expansion of the

Queensborough Community Centre totaling \$6.2 million, have been set aside and considered a priority for the City in 2009 - 2013.



In 2006, the City initiated a **Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan**. The Plan's objectives were to:

- align parks and recreation services, resources and initiatives with the city's strategic vision and priorities;
- assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the New Westminster Parks and Recreation Department in meeting the parks, recreation and cultural needs of current and future city residents, organizations and businesses;
- identify the department services required to better respond to those needs
- provide visionary leadership in the continuing growth and development of local residents and the community



WHAT DOES THE EXISTING QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY PLAN SAY?

The existing *Queensborough Community Plan* makes eight recommendations for Parks and Open Space. These are:

- completion of a plan for the perimeter trail;
- land acquisition to allow for perimeter trail development along the Fraser River;
- dedication of the West Parkland/Habitat area as parkland;
- development of a master plan for each new park, including a financial plan and strategy for the timing of the park development;
- development of a new master plan for Ryall Park;
- pursuit of park and open space priorities during the review of development

applications in the community;

- exploration of funding from other levels of government, and agencies, for open space acquisition and development;
- exploration of innovative developments or partnerships with the private sector to provide the various amenities requested by the community;

Since the adoption of the *Queensborough Community Plan*, progress has been made. A plan for the Perimeter Trail has been completed. Trail implementation is underway and some portions are built. The West Parkland/Habitat Area has been dedicated as parkland, and opened this year as Thompson's Landing Park. Parks and Open Space priorities have been

considered during the development application process such as at Port Royal with the establishment of Port Royal Park, Community Gardens and Trail.

*The current **Queensborough Community Plan** forms part of the **Official Community Plan** of the City. Adopted by Council in 1995 after a three-year community process, the **Queensborough Plan** sets out a long-term strategy to guide future development and servicing decisions in the neighbourhood. The Plan provides a blueprint for development and how people may live, work, and play in Queensborough.*

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING IN THE CITY

The analysis of the existing city-wide parks system in the draft *Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan* have led to the development of strategies to address challenges facing the New Westminster Parks system. The six strategic directions outlined are:

1. Increase parkland acquisition;
2. Develop the bikes and trails network;
3. Enhance athletic parks facilities;
4. Reinvest in aging infrastructure;
5. Increase parks service levels, and
6. Enhance biodiversity



For Queensborough, these strategies lead to recommendations in the *Comprehensive Plan* to:

- acquire land for Neighbourhood Parks within a five-minute walking distance of those residents not presently served by parks;
- acquire the “Chevron Lands” on the north side of Ryall Park;
- develop the larger park site on Ewen at Derwent Way as a Community Park that includes space for playing fields (A small neighbourhood park on Ewen and Wood is currently being developed);
- acquire smaller lots closer to Queensborough’s centre for community garden use. One potential site is under the BC Hydro right-of-way on the north side of Ewen Avenue;
- acquire Poplar Island to serve residents on both sides of the river, and to begin to create a better connection between Queensborough and the rest of New Westminster;
- develop City-owned properties as parks;
- complete the Queensborough Perimeter Trail as City Park land;
- explore options for a pedestrian connection from the mainland to Queensborough. If a connection at the Quay is not feasible, assess option of connecting the mainland to Poplar Island and then on to Queensborough;
- install infrastructure to meet current and future needs, including as washrooms at Ryall Park, and upgrade playgrounds/ water play and picnic shelters at Queensborough Community Centre
- expand parts of the Perimeter Trail

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While currently Queensborough is generally well served with park space, the neighbourhood lacks immediate access to many recreational activities such as swimming, and skating. However, Queensborough is the only neighbourhood with its own community centre. In addition, Queensborough's parks are clustered together, and some residents of the community lack parkland within a five minute walk of their homes. As it grows, the Queensborough neighbourhood will face challenges to meet the parks, trails and open space needs of future residents. Future growth projections for Queensborough suggest that by 2021, without additional parks, there will be not be adequate parkland to serve the growth in population.

Alternative forms of transportation, including bike routes, and walking trails, may provide additional recreational opportunities for Queensborough and improve accessibility to parks for residents who live beyond a five minute walk. In implementing these

linkages, streetscape design including lighting, connectivity with existing parks, outdoor amenities and open space will need to be considered. Land redevelopment within the community will also provide an opportunity for the neighbourhood to capture additional parkland and trails. To ensure adequate parkland in the neighbourhood in the future, the City will need to work closely with land owners, developers and others.

The City's Development Assistance Compensation (DAC) program identified two projects in Queensborough to be funded from gaming revenue. Priority 1 of DAC is \$5 million for park and open space to be constructed between the years 2008 to 2010. Priority 3 of DAC provides \$6.2 million for facilities expansion in Queensborough to be constructed between the years 2009 to 2013. The updating of the Queensborough Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for the planning of these priorities within the context of the neighbourhood's land use and community amenity needs.

LOOKING AHEAD: THINGS TO THINK ABOUT....

Priorities for Parks and Trails

The *Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan* has suggested a number of strategies for park acquisition and development. What should be the top priority for parks and trails in Queensborough? Should the focus be on the development of smaller, local neighbourhood parks or should efforts focus on linkages between park facilities?

Walkable Neighbourhoods and the Five Minute Rule

The *Comprehensive Plan* suggests that residents should be within a five minute walk of a park. Based on this, a number of areas of the community are under serviced. Should the new *Queensborough Community Plan* support a system of parks that allows all residents to be within a five minutes walk?

Access to the Waterfront and the Perimeter Trail

Public access to the waterfront can sometimes conflict with the needs of industry for security access and safety. How should recreational access to the waterfront be balanced with the needs of industry?

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