

RYALL PARK



Established **1940**
Size **22.8**
location **920 Ewen Avenue**

Ammenities

- **Soccer field**
- **Baseball & softball diamond**
- **Two tennis courts**
- **Queensborough Community Centre**
- **All WheelPark**

Ammenities

- **Trails & greenway**
- **Picnic Shelter**
- **Spray park**
- **Toddler & adventure playground**
- **Washrooms**

The district of Queensborough, an old military reserve preserved by the Royal Engineers for the defense of New Westminster in 1860, was incorporated into the city limits in 1889. A bridge was built to connect this eastern peninsula of Lulu Island to the mainland, and soon the area developed as a farming and industrial district. In splendid isolation from the rest of the Royal City, Queensborough developed a unique community spirit forged both by its rural character and in large measure by its ethnic diversity.

The growth of Queensborough in 1912 prompted city council to approve a bylaw to purchase a large acreage adjacent to the old Queensborough School on Ewen Avenue and Salter Street for the growing community. This site was part of a government reserve used for decades as the provincial gaol farm. The prisoners of the provincial gaol, located at Simcoe Street and Royal Avenue, were marched daily in leg irons to work the lands and produce the vegetables supplying the prison kitchens. After the establishment of the Oakalla prison farm in Burnaby in 1911, however, the site was no longer required for this purpose.

The land purchased by the city was already cleared, and could serve as a makeshift park site for field sports with very little improvement. However, it was somewhat redundant because of the rural nature of Queensborough: every field, ditch and dyke along the Fraser formed a playground far more interesting to area children than the cleared field of Queensborough Park.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s the old prison farm was leased to the Common Good Cooperative Association, which parceled out the land for vegetable production by families in need.

The Park Commission purchased another 9.7 acre park area across the street - bounded by Ewen and Boyd avenues and Hampton and Howes streets - in 1940. This park was named Ryall Park, after Herbert Ryall, a long-time Parks Commissioner who passed away in 1939.

During the fervor of World War II in 1942 city council leased out a portion of Queensborough Park, along with additional provincial government property, to enable construction of the Canadian Pacific Airlines plant. The province passed an Order in Council to facilitate the lease and legalize industrial use of the land.

To ensure that residents and children would not be without a playground, the Park Commission moved the playground equipment to Ryall Park in 1943. A playfield was cleared and the wading pool was built in 1947; a lacrosse box was built in 1953. In 1959, the remaining ground was cleared and a picnic area and playground established. The field house was constructed in 1961, the picnic shelter and stove built by the Rotary club in 1965 and a Little League diamond was installed in 1969. An Adventure Playground was built in 1974. The ethnic diversity of the neighbourhood was evident with the inclusion of a bocci court.

Construction of the Westminster Highway to tie in with the new Annacis Island bridge began to take shape in the 1980s, and Queensborough faced considerable physical change to its landscape and open spaces as a result. The new highway and relocation of the rail line from Ewen Avenue demanded that a portion of the park be appropriated for this purpose. Queensborough residents worked with the City to relocate the park to its current site to ensure the safety of children from the highway expansion. The old park site was left vacant before finally being redeveloped for the new Queensborough Fire Hall.

Ryall Park was re-established on a new parcel of land beside the old Queensborough Park site. Acquisition of the 23,713 acres of land cost \$50,292. It was here that the Queensborough Community Centre was built, at a cost of \$847,500, with funding from the Queensborough Neighborhood Improvement Program. Designed by Carlberg, Jackson Partners, the building was officially opened on June 16, 1978 by Mayor Muni Evers.

The new Ryall Park began to take shape in 1983. Ball diamonds and fences were installed in 1984 and the picnic area built in 1985. 1986 saw the development and opening of the playground area and spray pool. Today Ryall Park is the heart of Queensborough, one of the most unique neighbourhoods of Metro Vancouver.

The new 2011 All-Wheel Park is for skateboarders, inline skaters, BMX and mountain bike enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. The site will feature a 12,000 square foot combined concrete bowl and street-course specifically designed with boarders and skaters in mind offering state of the art features and challenges. Opportunities will exist for free style BMX bike riding in the bowl area as well. The eastern portion of the site will include a 120 metre long BMX dirt track that will be unique to Metro Vancouver. Track lines, jumps of varying degrees of difficulty and pump tracks will all be incorporated into a twisting and undulating terrain. There will even be spectator area to watch all the action.

Behind the Name...Ryall Park:



ITP1901

Herbert Ryall

Born: 1867

Died: October 27, 1939

Herbert Ryall was born in Paris, Ontario in 1867. He apprenticed as a druggist as a young man before moving to Manitoba, and subsequently to New Westminster in 1889, to continue his trade as a druggist and to work with resident drug store owner D.S. Curtis.

Ryall's reputation as a lacrosse player preceded him, and he happened to arrive in town on the day of a big game. Local members of the New Westminster Lacrosse Club had a wagon waiting at the train station to whisk him to the field; he was playing within ten minutes of his arrival to shore up the fortunes of the home team.

In 1939 his front page obituary in *The British Columbian* read in part:

"A life-long interest in sport was one of Mr. Ryall's outstanding characteristics. In his younger days he was a member of the New Westminster lacrosse team that toured Eastern Canada in 1900, meeting all the main teams and returning undefeated. After he hung up his stick he continued to be one of the most active supporters of the game. For many years he was treasurer and later secretary of the club. He was interested also in other forms of sport including football and baseball and was one of the organizers of the British Columbia Baseball League.

Of recent years Mr. Ryall's principal public activity has been in connection with the work of the park's board, to which he was elected in 1929 two years after it was created and of which he was Chairman at the time of his death. He had been a member of the board continuously since his first election.

Mr. Ryall was a strong supporter of every movement that provided playing facilities in New Westminster and was generous with his money as well as his time and energy. Many times when funds were not available he personally took care of the finances. His interest in sport and his activities on the parks board have been a big factor in the athletic life of the city."