

AGENDA
Natural Areas, Parks, and Trails Advisory Committee
Learning Center, Municipal Annex.
Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

The District of Saanich lies within the territories of the lək'wəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the WSÁNEĆ peoples represented by the Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tseycum and Malahat Nations.

We are committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community. We are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. We all share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- April 13, 2023 (attachment)

2. CHAIR'S REMARKS

3. ECOSYSTEMS AND DEVELOPMENT

- Counsellor Judy Brownoff
Memo attached for information

4. ADVOCACY RESOLUTION TO 2023 UBCM CONVENTION

- Counsellor Judy Brownoff
Memo attached for information

5. SAANICH ENVIRONMENT AWARDS

- Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks, Recreation and Community Services

6. URBAN FOREST STRATEGY UPDATE

- Alix Link, Manager, Urban Forestry, Natural Areas, and Community Stewardship

7. BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY UPDATE

- Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks, Recreation and Community Services

* Adjournment *

The next meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.
In order to ensure quorum, please contact Angela Hawkshaw at 250-475-5494 ext. 3505 or angela.hawkshaw@saanich.ca if you are unable to attend.

File: 1420-30 NAPT

Memo

To: Natural Areas, Parks, and Trails Advisory Committee Members
From: Councillor Judy Brownoff
Date: April 4, 2023
Subject: Ecosystems and development

BACKGROUND:

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change, and prevent a mass extinction. It will only succeed if everyone plays a part.

Saanich signed a [Proclamation](#) demonstrating Saanich's support and participation in the [United Nations \(UN\) Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#) 2021 to 2030.

We are currently developing, under our Urban Forest Strategy, tools to regulate and enforce tree protection, maintenance, and replacement, as well as planting site design. A key goal in the 2010 Urban Forestry Strategy is "to Protect and Enhance the Urban Forest". Further there should be no net loss as per canopy policy. Quite often applications do not meet the intent of this important policy, as adopted by Council.

In a recent article on *The Westshore*, on **how urban trees can be saved during development**, an Arborist highlighted this issue in Saanich's Zoning requirements:

"... What they didn't understand—and, Saunders suggests many Greater Victorian politicians also don't—is that Saanich's zoning requirements on the new building edged into the space the tree needed to safely grow. After requirements for utility hook ups, a driveway, and sidewalk improvements were met, there was not enough space left for tree."

Previously, when a subdivision of land was proposed where three or more additional lots would be created, Section 510 of the Local Government Act required that a park contribution be made to a maximum of 5% of the land under application.

Saanich currently does not see a lot of subdivisions of that size and most development along corridors, villages and centers are townhouses and condos. The Provincial subdivision legislation for 5% park land does not apply.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the NAPT Committee request that this memo be forwarded to Diamond Head Consulting, the consultant for the Urban Forest Strategy Update and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, for consideration in the development in these strategies.
2. That the Consultant consider including a recommendation in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy related to policies that would prevent the degradation of ecosystems on Saanich sites or development sites to meet Saanich's commitment to support and participate in the [United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#) (2021 to 2030).
3. That the Consultant consider including a recommendation in the Urban Forest Strategy Update related to a review of zoning requirements for new builds as it relates to the impacts on space needed for planting and retaining trees on these sites.

Prepared by: _____


Judy Brownoff
Councillor

cc: Suzanne Samboroski, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services
Paul de Greef, Manager, Park Plan and Development, Parks, Recreation and Community Services

File: 1420-30 NAP T

Memo

To: Natural Areas, Parks, and Trails Advisory Committee Members
From: Councillor Judy Brownoff
Date: May 5, 2023
Subject: Advocacy Resolution to 2023 UBCM Convention

BACKGROUND:

Protecting and restoring biological diversity is consistent with Canada's commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and BC's commitments in the Together for Wildlife Strategy, as well as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Acting now to protect and restore biodiversity contributes toward more resilient and healthy local communities — advancing community health and healthy waterways, watersheds, airsheds, and plant and animal species. These actions also make financial sense, containing emergency management and infrastructure costs in the context of climate change.

Creating a *Local Natural Areas Protection Fund* provides a mechanism for the Province to partner with local governments, allocating funds to municipalities, regional districts and First Nations to support land acquisition for biodiversity and ecosystem health.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Saanich Council endorse the following resolution and direct staff to send electronic copies to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and local governments in this regional district, requesting favourable consideration and resolutions of support:

Resolution: Supporting Biodiversity in Local Communities

WHEREAS British Columbia and Canada have committed to protecting and restoring biological diversity, including in the Convention on Biological Diversity and the *Together for Wildlife Strategy*;

AND WHEREAS protecting and restoring biological diversity contributes toward more resilient and healthy local communities, as well as ecosystem health, while helping to contain emergency management and infrastructure costs in the context of climate change;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Province work with local governments and First Nations to support the protection and restoration of biological diversity in local communities, including establishing a *Local Natural Areas Protection Fund* to support local efforts to protect and acquire land for biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Prepared by: 
Judy Brownoff
Councillor

cc: Suzanne Samboroski, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services
Paul de Greef, Manager, Park Plan and Development, Parks, Recreation and Community Services

MINUTES
NATURAL AREAS, PARKS & TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Via Microsoft Teams
April 13, 2023, at 4:02 p.m.

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff, Pamela Carroll, Christine Harbord, Dave Marecek, Evan Papps, Don Sutton, Darrell Wick

Staff: Megan Squires, Senior Transportation Planner; Paul de Greeff, Parks Manager of Planning & Development; Alix Link, Manager of Urban Forestry, Parks; Mike Goldsworthy, Park Planner Designer; Nikki McWalters, Landscape Technician, Parks; Troy McKay, Senior Manager, Engineering; Kirsten Brazier, Senior Committee Clerk; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Catherine Du Bois, David Little

CHAIR'S REMARKS

- J. Brownoff welcomed members to the committee.
- Preference is to meet in person, starting in May. Hybrid will be an option soon.
- Walking tours will also be added to meetings.

INTRODUCTIONS

- Introductions of staff and committee members.

REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

- J. Brownoff reviewed the Natural Areas Parks and Trails terms of reference.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

The Senior Manager of Engineering Services and the Senior Transportation Planner provided an update on Active Transportation Plan (ATP).

- The first ATP was adopted by Council in 2018 as a guide for active transportation developments for 30 years.
- The ATP is updated on an ongoing basis. Five years have now gone by, leading to this update.
- An equity approach has been applied to the planning process and to the updated plan. This is a key priority for this update.
- Equity considerations are informing the planning process. Gaps in our approach to equity are being reviewed and are then addressed.
- Staff are working with a tool to map out equity deserving groups in Saanich. It will help to inform priorities for infrastructure projects.
- The process of updating the plan is scheduled to be completed in the Fall of 2023. We are currently in phase 4 of 5. Phase 5 will begin in July and the update will be presented to this committee and then Council in Fall of 2023.
- Stakeholders were engaged in phases 2 and 3.
- Transportation Committees have been consulted throughout. A summary can be found on the Active Transportation page on the website.
- Phase 4 focuses on public engagement and input will take place in May and June.
- Communication methods with the public and stakeholders include social media, print media, email notifications, and the project webpage.
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Committee Discussion

- The plan is updated every 5 years. Demographics are updated for each review.
- The equity review did not identify glaring gaps but allow staff to have more information of how to reach different groups. A standard approach to reach the community is to hold open house events. Staff are reviewing barriers to participation and look to find ways to engage various groups.
- Crosswalks with notification lights will be updated to a new standard as projects come up.
- The Road Safety Action Plan is also being updated and opportunities for improvements are being identified.
- Older adults have been identified as a stakeholder. Individuals and senior organizations have been consulted. This will continue throughout the engagement period.
- Engagement with youth has taken place through consultation with the School Boards.
- Transportation and appropriate zoning for local destinations needs to be considered.
- Bike parking at local destinations are in need of improvement. This is being heard through the ATP engagement and are being considered by staff.

McMINN BIKE PARK REFRESH

The Parks Manager of Planning & Development presented on the McMinn Bike Park.

- The Bike Park is located in Cordova Bay with a forested
- A bike park refresh has been proposed to better meet user needs.
- Local youth were consulted as part of the engagement for this park.
- The park was built in 2021. It currently has design element issues, invasive species and materials problems (e.g., rocks).
- Staff are collaborating with South Island Mountain Bike Society (SIMS) to refresh the existing project.
- On May 10th a workshop will take place at Outerbridge Park. Staff hope to have the updated park open by the end of the summer.

Committee Discussion

- Focus was initially on younger children at the onset of the development of the park. There are a variety of ages of youth using the park.
- There are a range of community members that can have access to these facilities if a better design is employed.
- This facility has not yet met the needs of user groups. Many kids are attracted to the forest area.
- SIMS has been engaged to discuss how to move kids out of the forest and onto the user facility.

BECKWITH DAM DECOMMISSIONING

The Park Planner Designer provided an update on the Beckwith Dam decommissioning project.

- Beckwith Park is adjacent to farming community and has a man-made pond. There are two small dams and one larger dam, built in the late 1950's. It originally was used for farm irrigation.
- A third party currently owns the water license. The park is now owned by Saanich and the owner of the water license would like to give it up.
- Dam safety regulations have recently changed and are now stricter.
- Proposals for abandoning the water license include breaching the dam. Other

objectives are to ensure there is no safety risk to the public and to retain existing trails, trees and vegetation.

- Public engagement initially took place with signs posted at the park. An open house took place in February 2023, with an online questionnaire circulated. A project webpage was established to provide information.
- Public engagement results valued the native vegetation, water levels, existing trees and wildlife habitat.
- There is still some confusion as to the proposed partial decommissioning of the dam. This would reduce the safety risk from significant to low.
- The water license would be transferred to Saanich. A new footbridge would be installed.
- This project would be funded by the current water license holder.
- Alternatives would not satisfy public interests and provincial regulations.
- If the dams were to be removed it would have significant environmental impacts.
- Staff are fine tuning the preferred partial decommissioning option to minimize impacts to the environment.

Committee Discussion

- The engineer working on the project continues to test water level management options.
- More investigation is taking place with the goal to raise the water level.
- Neighbours will be consulted and signs in the park will be updated as needed.
- The North Quadra Community Association is involved in these discussions.
- An environmental consultant is on board with this project. Part of the project would be introducing native species of plants to the area.
- Once the hazard rating of the dam is downgraded and the hazard rating is lowered to low, the water license can then be transferred to the District. This will then allow for enhancements and further initiatives to take place.
- Once the water is lowered, there will be less water feeding into Beckwith ponds. The main change would be where the water would flow into the creek.
- Staff have been engaging with and educating the community to facilitate this administrative handover.

RUTLEDGE SPRAY PARK

The Park Planner Designer presented on next steps for the Rutledge Spray Park.

- A grant was received to install a spray park at Rutledge Park. A design/build competition saw 4 proposals submitted. The contract will be finalized next week.
- Saanich has acquired land to expand the original park.
- The Quadra Cedar Hill Community Association proposed that Saanich build a spray park.
- At the same time the spray park will be installed, a new water and sewer line will also be laid.
- The project is funded through grants, the District, community amenity contributions, and donations.
- Staff will apply for a Tire Stewardship BC grant for a rubber playground surface.
- Water play pad includes 20 features and is “American Disabilities Act” (ADA) compliant.
- It has been designed to encourage adventure, discovery, and exploration.
- The dry playground will encourage interactive play. A slide, zipline, swings, spinners, natural logs and steppers will be installed.
- The existing pink elephant will be retained.

- A washroom building will be installed and will be wheelchair accessible, gender neutral, include change rooms and a small maintenance room.
- An open house will be scheduled this spring and feedback will be incorporated.
- Construction will start in July and will open to the public in October. Access to the splash park will open the summer of 2024.

Committee Discussion

- Water source planning is being explored. Staff are considering retaining water in a storage tank that could be used to water trees. It is currently planned to be a flow through system.
- The spray park will have water saving features added to it. A rain garden has been included to drain the park that would be treated and sent to the storm drain system.
- The dry park will include components that are attractive to the 5 to 12 years age group.
- Music in the Park will continue, no construction will take place in the evening.
- The new building will help to form a windbreak.
- A public art component will also be included in the design and build.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is May 11, 2023, at 4 pm.

Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary