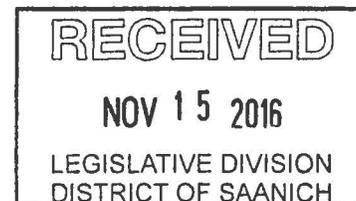




## The Corporation of the District of Saanich

# Report

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks and Recreation  
**Date:** 11/15/2016  
**Subject:** Mount Douglas Park Access Study



### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with options to address access to Mount Douglas Park. In keeping with Council's motion *"that such options should attempt to minimize impact to the special nature, character and experience that access routes themselves provide to users of the park,"* staff undertook a study with the intent to report back to Council in November.

### OBJECTIVE

The main objective was to undertake a comprehensive study to develop options for improving community access to key trails and facilities in Mount Douglas Park. Key modes of access included cycling, pedestrian, transit and vehicle. The access study was not intended to be a park management plan, concept plan or master plan for the park.

### BACKGROUND

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Council endorsed a staff recommended process to develop options to address concerns raised regarding access to Mount Douglas Park by some members of the public, especially related to recent parking restrictions at the north end of Glendenning Road. Since February, staff have undertaken the following;

- Developed a Project Charter.
- Created a Terms of Reference and established a community based Project Advisory Team (PAT) consisting of 9 major stakeholders and staff from Parks, Engineering and Fire to act as an advisory body during the course of the Park Access Study at Mount Douglas Park.
- Developed a detailed inventory of existing parking areas, bicycle facilities, pedestrian routes and transit facilities.
- Undertaken a public survey through the summer months.
- Undertaken a detailed access study employing a transportation consultant (Urban Systems).

- Developed draft recommendations to enhance all forms of access.
- Hosted a public open house, provided a virtual open house on the Saanich website and undertaken a second survey for the public to provide input on the draft recommendations.
- Presented an overview of the study and key draft recommendations to three Advisory Committees of Council; Bicycle and Pedestrian (BIPED), Environment and Natural Areas (ENA) and Parks, Trails and Recreation (PTR).

The opportunity for public and committee input concluded on October 31<sup>st</sup> and in total more than 700 surveys were received. All study materials and survey results are available online at [www.saanich.ca/parks](http://www.saanich.ca/parks)

## DISCUSSION

The data analysis points to several key findings and recommendations. The proposed recommendations are organized by access mode as follows:

- 6 recommendations to improve pedestrian access
- 5 recommendations to improve cycling access
- 4 recommendations to improve transit access
- 10 recommendations to improve vehicle access

Based on the feedback obtained from the open house and follow up survey the top 5 recommendations include the following;

- Improve pedestrian connections to trails across major roadways within the park
- Improve the shoulder/sidewalk on Blenkinsop Road between the Mercer trail and parking area off Blenkinsop
- Create effective signage to alert drivers about speed limits, pedestrians and cyclists on Churchill Drive
- Consider adding a few additional parallel parking spaces where space permits on Glendenning Road near the trail entrance
- Improve entrance/exit to the Beach parking area complete with pedestrian and bicycle facilities to make safer movements to the remainder of the park

More information about the specific recommendations and their ranked level of support based on the October survey (247 participants) can be found in the Mount Douglas Park Access Study Summary Report (attached). While some of the recommendations will be relatively easy to implement, others will be more costly, or as is the case with transit, be referred to other jurisdictions for review and implementation. Others, such as a recommendation to add bike lanes on Cedar Hill Road, will be referred to the Active Transportation Plan, which the Engineering Department has just initiated and where Parks is a key partner. Recommendations that require capital funding will be included in future capital program submissions from Parks and Engineering departments for Council's consideration.

Mount Douglas Park is the largest natural park in Saanich. Given that the park serves the entire region, a large majority of park visitors arrive by automobile and there is a significant amount of existing infrastructure devoted to automobiles in the park. As such, the transportation consultant's work focused mainly on gaining a better understanding of the current situation with vehicular traffic. Some key findings that emerged from Urban Systems analysis and the public surveys indicates that:

- Almost 70% of respondents to the summer survey (458 participants) were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the parking facilities in the park.
- Turnover analysis and the survey findings reveal that the majority of park visitors stay for less than 2 hours.
- Weekdays were shown to be busiest in the evening.
- Weekends tended to be busiest in the early afternoon.
- The number one preferred choice for parking is Churchill Drive parking lot, followed by the Beach parking area with Glendenning parking area a close 3<sup>rd</sup>. Glendenning (5 designated spaces) and Churchill (28 designated spaces) lots were consistently the locations most likely to be considered full capacity based on industry standards.
- Overall, parking facilities in the park are generally sufficient (ie. less than 85% occupancy) however, there is room for improvement and opportunities to expand parking availability in key locations.
- The public online survey showed that 72% of respondents did not support creating additional parking using parkland.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

While the issues surrounding Glendenning access precipitated this report, there were a number of important access recommendations throughout the park as a result of the study. Many of the recommendations contained in the access study are relatively straight forward to implement, while others will take inter-agency cooperation. Access into Beach parking will be an important consideration moving forward in not only the Active Transportation Plan, but also in discussion with BC Transit and other agencies.

Viewing the Park through a multi-modal lens creates opportunities to improve access for all, regardless of transportation mode. In approving the Mount Douglas Access Study, Council provides staff the lens and tools to improve Mount Douglas Park access over the next five to ten years.

The Urban Systems traffic study data revealed that both Glendenning and Churchill parking areas were the most challenging given their popularity. The Churchill parking area was improved and slightly expanded in 2009, and without major disruptions to the park, there are no opportunities to increase capacity. The Glendenning parking area which currently has five (5) stalls (inside the park) has a number of options available to increase capacity.

The traffic study undertaken by Urban Systems recommended the creation of a few additional parallel parking spaces along Glendenning and that clear signage be provided to indicate illegal parking. Additional information gained during the study period reflect a variety of opinions, ideas and potential solutions for the parking challenges at Glendenning.

## **Glendenning Trail Head Access**

While survey feedback, along with observations made at the Glendenning Trail Head parking area are mixed; 72% of survey respondents did not support converting parkland into parking. However, 76% of respondents to the open house survey expressed support for some additional parking on Glendenning Rd.

The road is narrow and has a rural character with mature trees that warrant preservation. The demand for parking in this area is high since the trails in this part of the park are flat and easy to walk. The need to ensure emergency vehicle access is also an important consideration.

A number of options have been considered in an attempt to reflect the comments and opinions heard from various sources including the public open house, follow up survey and presentations to advisory committees. While each option responds to the spirit of the Council motion to a varying degree, there is no easy solution. One of the options available to Council is status quo, however, the lack of parking to this accessible trail will continue to be an issue.

Based on the need for continued service and emergency vehicle access, the condition and character of road, and the community's feedback regarding the protection of parkland, staff recommends an addition of up to five (5) parking spots on Glendenning Road (resulting in a total of 10 parking spots).

If in the future, Council and the community determine a need for additional parking, there is an ability to add up-to five (5) to 10 additional parking spots in the Park. Engineering staff indicate that preliminary costs to provide 5 parking spaces on Glendenning Road are estimated to be up to \$80,000. These costs will be confirmed through more detailed design work but provides an indication of costs at this time.

Based on the second public survey conducted after the open house that indicated 76% of respondents would support an option for parking on Glendenning, this option would most likely be highly favourable with survey respondents and those that access the park from this entry to enjoy the gentle grade of the trail. Recognizing there may be some concern from Glendenning residents regarding the re-instatement of parking, the maximum number of stalls that could be accommodated on the road would be limited to five (5).

## **SUMMARY**

The 25 recommendations and Glendenning Road access options have been developed following an extensive consultation process that has been underway since April 2016. This has included the establishment of a stakeholders project advisory team, survey data gathered from more than 700 total participants, a public open house, feedback from three Council Advisory Committees and a detailed access study conducted during the busy summer months.

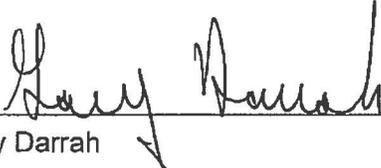
As directed by Council last February, staff, where necessary, have prepared options for what is arguably the most challenging access situation for park visitors by considering access as a whole to the Park and also considering what could be done at the Glendenning Trailhead.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council;

- 1) Endorse the recommendations in the Mount Douglas Park Access Study - Summary Report, and
- 2) Direct staff to provide up to five (5) parking spots on Glendenning at a cost up to \$80,000 to increase parking to Glendenning Trailhead to 10 spaces.

Prepared by

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Darrah  
Manager, Park Planning and Design

Approved by

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Suzanne Samborski  
Director of Parks and Recreation

## Attachments

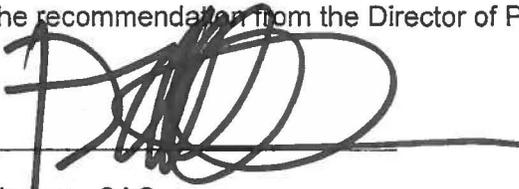
Mount Douglas Park Access Study – Summary Report

Mount Douglas Park Access Study – Summary Report Appendices

- 1 Existing Parking Inventory
- 2 Mount Douglas Park Access Study - Summary Report
- 3 Map of Access Points and Trail Difficulty Rating
- 4 Urban Systems Research and Report
- 5 Project Advisory Team Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- 6 Results of the Online Public Survey
- 7 Open House Presentation Panels
- 8 Results and Comments from the Open House

## ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Parks and Recreation

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Thorke, CAO

cc: Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering  
Mike Burgess, Fire Chief