

Parks and Natural Environment Advisory Committee

7pm April 16, 2025

1730 Crown Street – DNV operations centre

Minutes

Present: Amy Tsang, Vice-Chair (Chaired this meeting)

Karin Jensen

Glen Parker

Adele Wilson

Hamish Fairweather

Michael Cliff

Councilor Lisa Muri

Caroline Jackson

Adam Vasilevich

Graham MacInnes

Nicole Foth

Zeralynne Te

Absent: Charlene Seward

Katrina Laube

Johanna Moretto, Chair

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Approval of the Agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda with minor revisions to be made.

Seconded

THAT the April 16, 2025 agenda is approved.

CARRIED

3. Adoption of February 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to adopt February 19, 2025 meeting minutes.

Seconded

THAT the February 19, 2025 meeting minutes are approved.

CARRIED

4. People, Dogs, and Parks Update

Introduction:

- The number of dogs in the Lower Mainland has increased drastically since the Covid Pandemic.
- The province has recently mandated that the DNV add 22,000 new homes to the District by 2041. This will only increase the number of dogs in the District.

- With greater density there is less private space for people and their dogs so they are using Parks more and more.
- In the 2012 Parks and Open Space Plan there was a recommendation to create a separate plan to manage the impacts of dogs in the District.
- The plan is currently in the draft phase and was developed by incorporating feedback from consultants, staff, stakeholders PNEAC and the public. There will be a final round of community engagement and then the plan will be finalized and presented to PNEAC and council.
- There will be a mix of relief areas, fenced off-leash parks, and dog friendly trails.
- GIS helped develop heatmaps showing areas most in need of open space for dogs. The heatmap was created based on population density and the density of apartment/condo buildings because these buildings have a lot of dogs without immediate access to open space.

Guiding Principles:

- Wellness
- Sustainability
- Community
- Stewardship

Draft Vision Statement:

District parks, guided by clear regulations, offer enjoyable opportunities to connect with nature, and promote well-being for all visitors, including non-dog owners, dog owners, and their canine companions. Parks balance recreational access and park amenities with environmental protection and ecological integrity, recognizing that everyone has a role in keeping them clean, harmonious, and safe.

Comments on the Vision Statement:

- It's a little long.
- The word clean feels a bit off and could maybe be changed.
- Add the word inclusive.
- "And their canine companions" feels like dogs have the same rights as their owners and non-dog owners.
- Might be helpful to look at the general Parks vision statement and remove any redundancy in this vision statement.
- Do we need a vision statement? Yes, it describes our overarching goals and is something that we can keep coming back to as we create a plan.
- Metro Van uses "Connect and Protect", could we sum up our vision into something tight knit like that?

General Comments:

- Add in stimulation to dog parks – agility course features, logs, water features, etc.

- Visual separation is needed in off leash dog areas so that dogs don't bolt across the entire space to other dogs.
- Adjust the word stewardship as this generally means more that people are stewarding the parks themselves. The word influence was suggested.
- The DNV is communicating with other municipalities and working with them. One example of this is the District adopting Metro's signage so that there is continuity.
- Engagement is so important and we need to make sure we're doing this properly to avoid backlash and people understand why changes are needed.
- If we're taking anything away, a phased approach is the best approach.
- Be careful with the word accessible and its connotations.

Comments on the Draft Strategic Directions:

- Make sure if we are going to have regulations laid out for people that we can back them up. Do we have enough enforcement capacity? Can we achieve this? If not, we should scale back for now.
- There is both concern and support for the specificity of these directions. One thought is that we should make these broader for more flexibility. Another thought is that specificity is good and we shouldn't play it safe.
- A suggestion is made to consolidate engagement and collaboration, but there are conflicting opinions on this.
- Cleanliness could fit in with Ecological Integrity.
- There is a fundamental conflict between dogs and ecological integrity. Dogs are predators and they are destructive by nature. The North Shore Stream Keepers have been getting calls from residents who are angry and wanting dogs out of creeks due to their impacts on salmon. We need to be careful how much space we are creating for dogs. Can we identify critical areas (for salmon, birds, ecosystems such as wetlands) and enforce dog free zones? Educational signage could help with this so people understand why these areas are dog free.
- The committee agrees that the issue of ecological integrity is important. If we need to put up fences and fine people, let's do it. There must be consequences for ecological destruction.
- It would be good if there were guidelines for where signage should be placed. For example, at trailheads, in ecologically sensitive areas, etc. This guidance would help avoid sign pollution.
- Let's ensure we're providing alternatives for dogs, before restricting areas.
- Is there any regulation saying we need a certain area of open space for a certain number of dogs? Many of our parks are shredded up by dogs.
- When was the last Fees and Charges Bylaw updates? It is updated yearly, but we have overarching authority that controls the maximum price for fees and charges.
- We have so much public space and so few staff for enforcement within this space.
- Enforcement is hard for the District because people often fight tickets, which then costs the District thousands of dollars. Because of this the Rangers are often encouraged to give warnings first. The legal system is against us in this regard.

- We should set a higher standard (or compliance goals) for dog licensing. DNV staff go door to door in the summer to sign people up for licenses.
- Garibaldi Park might be a better place for a dog park than Parkgate as a lot of people already use Garibaldi as an off-leash area. Parkgate is smaller and closer to townhouses.
- In McCartney Park, there is a muddy area at the end of Emerson. This could be a good dog area as it's already degraded but there is a drainage issue.
- The Blueridge Community Association would like an off-leash dog area in Blueridge Park and people are already using the park in this way.
- Communities could raise money if they want a dog park in their area.

Next Steps:

Draft plan to be created and sent to the public and PNEAC for another round of engagement before the plan is finalized.

5. Official Community Plan (OCP) Revision

Introduction:

- The province has passed legislation to allow more housing to be built quicker.
- As a part of this legislation municipalities completed a calculation to determine a set number of homes that must be added by 2041. For the DNV 22,000 new homes must be added in this timeframe.
- A larger population means more people who want parks, trails, and greenspace.
- The province has mandated minimum allowable densities and building heights around certain transit hubs. Capilano University and Phibbs Exchange were identified by the province as main transit hubs in the DNV.
- The negotiation process for affordable housing when rezoning has changed and is not as effective.
- The 2011 OCP identified four key growth centres – Lions Gate/Marine Drive, Lynn Valley, Lynn Creek, and Maplewood.
- The 2021 OCP agreed with the bulk of growth happening in these key areas. The plan was to add 7,425 homes by 2030. Now that number has increased exponentially.
- All municipalities are required to update their OCP by the end of 2025 to plan for this growth. OCPs will then be updated every five years.
- Under the new legislation, where land use rezoning is compliant with the OCP, there is no longer a need for Public Hearings. This means that we need to create the OCP with this in mind.
- Utilities will also need to be updated to accommodate this growth
- One PNEAC member suggested that currently there is a housing affordability crisis, not just a vacancy crisis.

Three Scenarios:

- The scenarios are not set in stone and one must be chosen. They are a range of options that we can refine from. Elements of all scenarios could be combined into a final scenario.

- The 2011 OCP focused growth on four key centers which have good access to amenities, transit, daily needs, employment, schools, services, parks, etc. The OCP team thinks this is a solid foundation and has built the scenarios from this foundation.

Scenario 1:

- 90% of growth to occur within the existing four key centers and higher density in boundaries of these centers. Limited change to existing neighbourhoods outside the town centres.
- Emphasis on higher density building forms (taller buildings).
- Least utility upgrades needed.

Scenario 2:

- 90% of growth to occur in four key centers, but expand Lionsgate/Marine Drive and Lynn Valley. The others cannot be expanded due to geographic constraints.
- Mixed density across a larger area with a blend of mid to high rise building forms
- Integration of buildings into existing neighbourhoods
- Focus on current and future transit options

Scenario 3:

- 75% of growth in four key centers, 25% of growth elsewhere – traffic corridors, village centers, etc.
- Greater mix of building forms and density. Multiplexes, townhouses, condos, etc.
- Wider distribution of growth. Growth targeted in Edgemont, Queensdale, Parkgate, Lynn Valley, Mount Seymour.
- More utility upgrades needed.

Discussion:

- Every single-family home is permitted a separate suite and coach house. Adding these into single-family homes would help us meet this number so this should be encouraged. Unfortunately, there has only been 45 coach house approvals since their introduction. There isn't enough interest in these options to rely on them.
- We used to have a growth paying for growth model, but the new legislation has changed this drastically. And unfortunately, residents are going to bear some of the costs.
- Growth is being focused on areas that have existing or planned rapid transit, but Translink is struggling with funding and with infrastructure limits.
- There are two golf courses we could get rid of to free up a lot of space for housing or parkland.
- There are parks in the four key centres, but is there enough parkland in the town centres for this much of a population increase? More studies will be done to figure out how much parkland we need for this increase in population.
- We can't create more land, so how can we work with what we have to create more greenspace? Even small local greenspaces help.

- We also must deal with other densifying communities across the Lower Mainland coming to the District to use our parkland.
- Can we mandate developers to include greenspace, playgrounds, and dog areas? Even if these are only accessible to residents, they help take the load off our parks.
- High rises should save more land area for parks, but we need to pay attention to small details in the OCP. Developers are not only building up now, but also out, which leaves little space for parks.
- We have tools to create below rental market housing (10% below market price), but unfortunately this is still unaffordable to many. We're tearing down current affordable housing and creating expensive housing.
- West Van and City of North Van are not rezoning. They are creating necessary housing within their current zoning.
- Any subsidized housing will now have to go on District land if we can find it. But we only get a small percent of tax dollars compared to the province and fed. And they are no longer creating subsidized housing.

Next Steps and Ongoing OCP Work

- Public survey is open until April 29th. [Official Community Plan Update 2025](#)
- If you have feedback please go through the survey. This way feedback can be quantified.
- There will be one more virtual meeting for the public (April 24th).
- Working to create stronger tenant protection measures.
- Implementing inclusionary zoning for affordable housing.
- Improving the transportation network
- Simplifying single family zoning.

6. Round Table

- The North Shore Stream Keepers just got a \$450,000 grant to continue their Mosquito Creek restoration project.
- Neptune Ports has agreed to a \$1M restoration project in Lynn Creek Estuary.
- DFO has approved replacement of the fish ladder on Hastings Creek and there is funding coming in for that.
- Seymour Salmonid Society has just created a restoration plan for the Seymour Estuary.

7. Next Meeting

Motion to hold the next meeting on June 18, 2025 at 7pm

Seconded

THAT the next meeting will occur June 18, 2025 from 7-9pm at the District Operations Centre

CARRIED

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm