

Present:

Mayor Locke, Chairperson
Councillor Bose, Vice-Chair
D. Jack
K. Purton
S. Sajda
D. Smith

Absent:

M. Lamont

Staff Present:

S. Neuman, General Manager, Engineering
Y. Yohannes, Director, Utilities
N. Aven, Director, Parks
P. Zevit, Biodiversity Conservation Planner
A. Sodha, Administrative Assistant

A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was Moved by K. Purton
Seconded by S. Sajda
That the agenda of the Environment and
Climate Change Committee meeting of June 14, 2023, be adopted.
Carried

After adoption of the agenda, the chair sought unanimous consent from the committee to add a report brought forward by S. Sajda regarding establishing a Heat Bylaw for Rental Units to the agenda.

It was Moved by K. Purton
Seconded by S. Sajda
That the agenda of the Environment and
Climate Change Committee meeting of June 14, 2023, be amended to include item
E1 - Establishing a Heat Bylaw for Rental Units.
Carried Unanimously

2. Adoption of May 9, 2023 Minutes

It was Moved by Councillor Bose
Seconded by D. Smith
That the minutes of the Environment and
Climate Change Committee meeting held on May 9, 2023;

1. Be amended under item B1. delegation from representatives of Friends of Bear Creek, to remove the reference to the construction of two temples and replace it with the construction of a parking lot expansion; and

2. That the minutes be adopted, as amended.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Dr. Bruce Kleeberger and Tim Yzerman, Representatives, HUB Cycling Surrey/ White Rock Local Committee**

Dr. Bruce Kleeberger and Tim Yzerman provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the City's state of cycling and highlighted the following points:

Background Information:

- HUB Cycling is a nonprofit organization that has been dedicated to removing barriers to cycling for 24 years.
- The central mission of HUB Cycling is to educate and motivate individuals, including those with disabilities, to embrace cycling as their preferred mode of transportation.
- The organization actively advocates for improvements in cycling infrastructure, envisioning a future where a higher number of people choose cycling as their primary means of getting around.

Goals and Initiatives:

- By the year 2030, HUB Cycling aims to achieve the goal of having a larger number of people engage in cycling more frequently.
- One of the notable events organized by HUB Cycling is "Go by Bike Week," a recent initiative that allowed thousands of participants to experience cycling for active transportation, and it was provided free of charge to all participants.
- The organization also focuses on organizing similar events that target schools during the spring season. These weeklong celebrations aim to foster a sense of community and highlight the advantages of cycling, such as reducing traffic congestion and promoting healthy, energized students.
- Another event, known as "Shop Motion," is aimed at showcasing the convenience and enjoyment of shopping by bike. This event took place in Newton in 2022, and it is scheduled to return this year.

Infrastructure Advocacy:

- HUB Cycling takes an active role in advocating for improvements in cycling infrastructure. They collaborate with local media to raise awareness about cycling-related issues.
- They emphasize the significance of creating a fully connected cycling network that is comfortable and accessible for the majority of individuals. They highlight the existing gaps in the infrastructure and the need for continuous enhancements.

Educational Programs:

- HUB Cycling offers comprehensive educational programs for both adults and children. In Surrey, they provide bike education classes for young children on school premises and for older children on local streets. The curriculum covers a range of topics including road rules and bike handling skills.
- The organization also places focus on adaptive bikes and inclusive cycling to address the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

City-Specific Efforts:

- In Surrey, there are 102 schools eligible for bike education programs. In 2023, the City funded 17 courses, while the Province funded nine courses. These programs primarily target grade four and five students, with some offerings for grade six and seven students.
- HUB Cycling also mentions other cities such as Vancouver, North Vancouver, New Westminster, Pitt Meadows, and Coquitlam that are also actively involved in providing cycling programs for grade six and seven students.
- Ten local advisory committees play a vital role in providing expertise and assistance in the process of improving cycling infrastructure and plans.
- One such committee exists in the City of White Rock, known as the Arcade Committee. This Committee actively supports events organized by HUB Cycling and provides guidance to the city regarding infrastructure projects, including offering design feedback for initiatives such as the 4th Ave project.

Infrastructure Challenges and Recommendations:

- The Committee acknowledges that there is a strong desire for cycling among the populace, but the lack of connected infrastructure hinders the full potential.
- Survey results from the City's Transportation Plan indicate that 70% of respondents express an interest in cycling, but 18% cite the absence of connected infrastructure as a significant barrier.
- Common challenges faced by cyclists include infrastructure gaps, unprotected segments, and conflicts with vehicles.
- The Committee suggests addressing these challenges by reallocating road space and implementing specific infrastructure such as separated bike lanes to make cycling a more viable alternative to car travel.

State of Cycling Report (2019):

- In 2019, HUB Cycling partnered with TransLink to conduct the State of Cycling Report, which aims to assess the state of cycling conditions across Metro Vancouver.
- The report analyzes factors like the comfort level of the cycling network, cycling rates, gender diversity in cycling, and the presence of supportive policies and practices.
- According to the report, Surrey's performance is below the average of other cities in Metro Vancouver concerning cycling safety and infrastructure.
- Existing infrastructure, including shared road bike lanes and inaccessible shoulders, does not provide a safe and comfortable cycling experience.

Cycling Network and Challenges:

- The current cycling network in Surrey is categorized with color codes representing different levels of comfort. Unfortunately, this infrastructure falls short of the desired standard.
- Despite the existence of some safe routes in Surrey, they often do not extend far enough, limiting options for cyclists.
- Although recent projects have improved the situation, further developments are still required.

- To create a safer cycling environment, infrastructure improvements such as separated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and reconfigured road spaces are crucial.

Infrastructure Design and Cycling Opportunities:

- The quality and design of cycling infrastructure play a significant role. Considerations for cohesion, directness, safety, separation, attractiveness, and providing pleasant experiences for cyclists are important.
- While there are challenges, Surrey still offers attractive places for cycling, including greenways, trails, and waterfront areas.
- Expanding cycling opportunities along rivers and promoting cycling tourism can be beneficial for the local community and businesses.

Advocacy and Future Hopes:

- Support and prioritization of active transportation, including the construction of a protected cycling network.
- Increased cycling education in schools and for adults, as well as promoting cycling for recreation.
- Investing in cycling infrastructure leads to healthier, happier, and more connected communities.

Representatives of HUB provided the following responses to questions from committee members:

Demographics:

- The age of people using bicycles can vary in different cities. Surrey's geography, which includes flat areas, can be favorable for cycling.
- E-bikes have gained popularity since 2005 and can benefit seniors.

Cycling Safety:

- Rearview mirrors can be helpful for cyclists in preparing and protecting their space on the road.
- Leaving bikes unattended in public places, like grocery stores or shopping malls, can be a concern, including the risk of theft.
- The City of Vancouver has a bike theft deterrent program called "Project 529" that has been effective in reducing bike theft and recovery of stolen bikes. It may be available in Surrey as well, with support from the City and the RCMP.

Cycling Education:

- Recently, there has been an increase in the number of seniors participating in cycling programs.
- Funding sources for cycling infrastructure can come from various avenues, such as government investments or revenue generated from cycling tourism.
- The process of acquiring land from private properties for infrastructure development can be complex but is possible.

C. STAFF PRESENTATIONS**1. Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) and Biodiversity Design Guidelines (BDG)**

The Biodiversity Conservation Planner provided a PowerPoint presentation overview on the City's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) and Biodiversity Design Guidelines (BDG), highlighting the following information:

The Spirit Garden in South Surrey exemplifies the outstanding work happening City-wide and its ability to enhance the City's beauty. It represents the objectives and BDGs in terms of design and functionality. The Biodiversity Conservation Planner has met with residents who have been involved in creating and maintaining the site, which is on City-owned land, since 2009. The site vision was developed by a neighbourhood resident and implemented with support through Engineering and subsequent neighbourhood enhancement grants through Parks – Community Enhancement funding. The majority of the work and ongoing maintenance of the site is through volunteer efforts. The site showcases the opportunity to create an urban biodiversity oasis through resident-driven interests with arms-length involvement by the City.

The BCS was endorsed by Council in 2014 with the Parks Division leading on implementation of this important City-wide strategy. There are several key themes in the strategy, related to climate change mitigation, agricultural stewardship, education and stewardship and land use planning. The importance of education and raising awareness among the public was emphasized. An example of this work is the successful completion of the fourth annual City Nature Challenge, which integrates the City's growing citizen science program using an international platform called iNaturalist. BCS implementation efforts have been ongoing for nearly 10 years with numerous accomplishments including the designation of Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Areas, the publishing of BDGs, and more recently agricultural-related initiatives and the upcoming Pollinator Conservation focus during Pollinator Week (June 19-25). Work for 2024, the 10th anniversary of the BCS is focusing on a Biodiversity Report Card.

The BDGs bring conservation action from a broad roadmap approach to the site level, considering operational and complementary aspects within the City. The guidelines developed in 2021 and are designed to align with other operational components and policies in the City and aim to provide guidance to private landowners and developers, allowing them to contribute to biodiversity conservation within their properties. The guidelines consist of eight different modules that allow for a range of options in designing and implementing biodiversity objectives. The BDGs have been incorporated into Neighbourhood Concept Plans and park planning with the intent for them to become a standard in capital projects, new park design and ongoing management of City lands and natural assets. A recent focus to increase biodiversity has been creating new and enhancing existing pollinator habitat. Further work is underway to develop additional guidelines to provide clear guidance for residents interested in "rewilding" their yards or boulevards or undertaking turf conversion projects that comply with City bylaws.

Examples of projects that incorporate the BDGs include the previously mentioned Spirit Garden, and Edgewood Park's pollinator meadow and biodiversity corridor, showcasing successful integration of pollinator habitat and biodiversity features in high density urban areas of the City.

Another focus is integrating green infrastructure into hardscape environments, considering challenges of redevelopment, and ensuring long-term viability. Learning from past experiences, it is important to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented actions and engage with residents to address their concerns. Collaboration with private landowners and developers is crucial in achieving sustainable biodiversity goals, as a significant portion of the City's Green Infrastructure Network is privately owned. Follow-up actions, including monitoring and maintenance of rehabilitated spaces and addressing invasive species, are integral to the success of biodiversity initiatives.

The BCS aligns with other key policies and strategies in the City, such as the Sustainability Charter, Official Community Plan, and Climate Change Action Strategy. There have been discussions regarding the potential for the BDGs to become compulsory standards in the future. There is recognition of the importance of biodiversity conservation alongside climate change as two critical challenges that need to be addressed. The issue of impermeable yards lacking vegetation is a concern, and community engagement and education are needed to encourage homeowners to incorporate green spaces within their properties.

One of the Committee members noted concern for the planting and concrete work along the new 84 Avenue section through Bear Creek Park.

The Committee questioned several areas including the effectiveness of the automated systems in place for maintenance, the distinct lines of planting instead of a more natural arrangement, and the impact of hard surfaces like concrete and artificial turf on water drainage and biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Conservation Planner emphasized the need for education and awareness among the public and looking to other cities for ideas as inspiration for similar initiatives in the City.

2. Green City Program

The Director of Parks provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Green City Program and highlighted information about the City's tree planting and management programs, as follows:

Trees, forests, and natural areas are important for creating a green and inclusive city, promoting the health and well-being of residents. The City recognizes the significance of trees in its overarching plans and strategies and actions.

The Green City Program, established in 2005, is a sustainable tree planting and management program aimed at augmenting the City's green infrastructure. The program includes activities such as tree planting, renovating older medians, community tree education, landscaping enhancements, preservation of forested

parklands, and tree planting in parks and natural areas managed by the City. The program is funded from an allocation of 2% of all building permit revenues received by the City, fines levied for tree-related infractions and cash-in-lieu for those trees that cannot be planted on development sites.

Beyond the Green City Program, tree planting and management in the City that take place on streets and in parks and is funded through various capital projects and operational programs. The program, along with other tree planting and management initiatives, contributes to increasing canopy cover, enhancing aesthetics, improving air quality, reducing heat, providing habitat for wildlife, and reducing stormwater runoff.

In residential neighborhoods, hundreds of trees are planted annually in areas where tree planting was not initially required. The program also supports the replacement of street trees along arterial and local roads when they die or are damaged. Hundreds of trees are planted annually in City parks that did not have sufficient shade trees initially.

Community tree planting events, such as Arbor Day and National Tree Day, are supported by the program, promoting tree planting, and educating people about the value of trees and their impact on the environment. Tree education is carried out through programs such as the annual Environmental Extravaganza and participation in citywide events like the Fusion Festival and Canada Day.

Forest preservation is occasionally achieved by purchasing forested parcels using funds from the program to bring the land into the City's park system. The program also covers tree replacement due to mortality and vandalism, focusing on replanting with more tolerant and resistant species. Grass areas are converted into forested areas each year, reducing maintenance costs and carbon emissions while creating new forested spaces with associated benefits. The program includes initiatives to enhance the maintenance of newly planted shade trees and natural areas, improving their survival and longevity. Management of naturally growing and resident-planted trees on boulevards is also increased, aiming to improve their overall structure, longevity, and preservation.

D. REPORT

1. Establishing a Sub-Committee of the Environment and Climate Change Committee File: 0540-20

The vote was separated as follows:

It was

Moved by Councillor Bose

Seconded by K. Purton

That the Environment and Climate Change

Committee receive the report for information.

Carried

It was Moved by S. Sajda
Seconded by D. Jack
That the Environment and Climate Change Committee establish a sub-committee entitled "Bear Creek Improvement Project (Sub-Committee to ECCC)" with the mandate to engage and participate with the Friends of Bear Creek Park throughout the Bear Creek Park Improvement Project.
Carried

There was consensus among committee members that the Sub-Committee meetings be a maximum of two hours instead of one hour as stated in the report.

It was Moved by S. Sajda
Seconded by D. Smith
That the Environment and Climate Change Committee appoint M. Lamont, K. Purton and D. Jack to the sub-committee for a term to be no more than three meetings to discuss the Bear Creek Park Improvement Project.
Carried

It was Moved by S. Sajda
Seconded by D. Jack
That the Environment and Climate Change Committee appoint M. Lamont as Chair and K. Purton as Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee.
Carried

It was Moved by S. Sajda
Seconded by D. Smith
That the Environment and Climate Change Committee direct staff to invite the Friends of Bear Creek to submit the names of five representatives to be appointed to the sub-committee for a term to be no more than three meetings to discuss the Bear Creek Park Improvement Project.
Carried

E. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Establishing a Heat Bylaw for Rental Units

It was Moved by S. Sajda
Seconded by K. Purton
That the Environment and Climate Change Committee:

1. Receive the report for information; and
2. Request staff to provide a report with options regarding a heat bylaw for rental units.

Carried

2. Roundtable

An informal sharing of information took place.

F. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 2023.

G. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by K. Purton

Seconded by S. Sajda

That the Environment and Climate Change

Committee meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The Environment and Climate Change Committee adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Mayor Locke, Chairperson