

NO: R154

COUNCIL DATE: July 22, 2024

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council

DATE: July 18, 2024

**FROM: General Manager, Corporate Services
Fire Chief
General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: 4000-01

SUBJECT: Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit Bylaw Enforcement Update

RECOMMENDATION

The Corporate Services, Fire Services, Engineering and Parks, Recreation & Culture Departments recommend that Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the City's approach to bylaw enforcement and compliance within the Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit area during the summer months. This report will also outline the City's plan to enhance its communication efforts to residents to create more awareness of non-permissible activities and behaviors in Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit.

BACKGROUND

On June 26, 2024, Council directed staff to better inform Surrey residents on the activities and behaviors that are not permitted in Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit and the appropriate contacts that residents may contact to request assistance if required. Council also directed staff to ensure that there is an effective bylaw compliance plan in place to address the activities and behaviors of individuals that are not in compliance with relevant City bylaws.

DISCUSSION

The Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit area is defined as the area that is North-West of the Burlington North rail tracks (attached as Appendix 'I'). This area is comprised of approximately 394 residences and 1000 residents, which represents less than a half percent (0.17%) of Surrey's total population. In recent years, Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit has increased in its popularity as a place for visitors to spend time on evenings and weekends during favorable weather. This experience is similar to other beachfront neighborhoods in Metro Vancouver such as English Bay, Kitsilano, Rocky Point, and White Rock.

Despite its relatively small size, the City continues to invest a high level of resources to mitigate disruptions to the neighborhood that result from the increase in summer visitors. Each spring the Bylaw Services Division formulates a Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit operational plan that guides its

efforts to address impermissible activities including beach fires, unpermitted alcohol consumption, noise, patrons in the park after dark, and dogs in prohibited areas. The following section highlights key aspects of the 2024 operational plan.

With a goal to reduce calls for service, ensure public safety, protect the environment, and enforce park regulations during the summer season, proactive patrols are conducted by Bylaw Services staff utilizing various patrol methods including bikes, foot patrols, ATV patrols, and vehicle patrols. Designated patrol zones cover key areas such as parking lots, beachfronts, Crescent Beach promenade, trails, and environmentally protected areas within Blackie Spit Park.

Bylaw Services staff conduct periodic daily patrols during peak hours, including weekends and holidays from 7:30AM - 9:30PM. Additional patrols are scheduled during special events or when heightened activity is anticipated. In addition, staff are assigned overtime so that they are able to enforce, in the park after dark, drinking, and other nuisance bylaw violations on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights from 9:30PM - 1:00AM. Calls and complaints that are received outside of the scheduled enforcement times are routed through Fire dispatch and recorded for action the next day. Staff diligently follow-up on any issues arising from the prior day.

Enforcement efforts prioritize violations of the Surrey Parks, Recreation & Cultural Facilities Regulation By-law, Surrey Highway and Traffic By-law, and Surrey Animal Responsibility Bylaw. Bylaw Services staff work in collaboration with the Surrey RCMP, BNSF Rail Police, and Surrey Fire Services to ensure a coordinated response to enforcement and emergency situations.

Priority violations include:

- In the park after dark;
- Dogs in areas not permitted;
- Dogs off-leash;
- Alcohol possession/consumption;
- Fires;
- Smoking;
- Parking violations;
- People and/or dogs in environmentally protected areas;
- Dog licensing; and
- Unauthorized obstructions.

Officers often engage with park visitors to provide information on park regulations, emphasizing the importance of compliance for community safety and environmental protection. Enforcement methods include verbal education and ticketing and are dependent on the severity and frequency of the violation. Bylaw Services staff utilize their discretion to determine the most appropriate course of action, with a focus on promoting compliance through education whenever possible.

Regular reviews of patrol activities and enforcement outcomes are conducted by Bylaw Services management to assess efficacy and adjust operational plans as deemed to be necessary. As summer is typically a busy time for bylaw enforcement across the City, staff are constantly balancing the enforcement needs of Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit with the needs of other areas of the City that are equally important.

Park Ambassador Program

The Park Ambassador Program operates mid-July to the end of August within Blackie Spit and Crescent Beach Park. The Ambassadors engage with park users to respond to concerns, assisting with wayfinding questions and litter picking to keep the Park clean. The goal of the program is to ensure visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience in Surrey's busiest parks. The Park Ambassadors work collaboratively with Bylaw Services and Surrey RCMP to report any issues within Parks.

In addition to the above patrol activities, new informational signage has been strategically placed throughout Crescent Beach to reinforce key regulations and encourage responsible behavior. Particular attention has been provided to environmentally protected areas, Crescent Beach promenade, and areas where fires are known to taken place.

Parking Enforcement

In April 2024, Engineering staff made modifications to parking signage along select road segments in Crescent Beach, as directed by Council. Corporate Report No. R075; 2024 is attached to this report as Appendix "II" The objectives of the parking signage changes was to: (1) encourage visitors to park in Blackie Spit parking lot rather than on streets; (2) improve road safety sightlines (3) 2hr restrictions around businesses to encourage turnover and (4) provide areas for pedestrians to walk safely rather than on roadways.

The most significant change was along McBride Avenue, north of Sullivan, where parking was restricted on one side to allow a safe pathway for pedestrians. This was completed as a 3-month pilot for summer 2024. Parking enforcement, fines and traffic surveys will continue throughout the summer to monitor and evaluate the pilot.

Beach Fire Response

Surrey Fire Services deploys resources to beach fire incidents that are within, or believed to be within, the City's jurisdiction. Where beach fire incidents are outside of the City's jurisdiction, Surrey Fire Services suppression crews will only respond to fires that are out of control or where assistance is being requested by an on-scene authority for that jurisdiction (i.e. RCMP, BNSF Rail).

Beach fires in coastal areas below the high tide line are outside of Surrey's jurisdiction. They are provincial jurisdiction and under the authority of the Coastal Fire Centre. Provincial jurisdiction is defined as south of the last house on Maple Street. Response to these locations will be at the request of the police. Currently, campfires are not permitted within Coastal Fire Centre's jurisdiction. Surrey RCMP and BNSF rail patrol teams will be operating along the tracks from the Border to Crescent Beach on random days between now and August 30.

Recently Parks staff conducted a fire risk assessment at 1001 Steps, Blackie Spit and Christopherson Steps, and deemed the risk to be low at all three locations.

As a result of concerns voiced by Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit residents, the City installed a large electronic message board at the entry point to the community that displays information on current fire regulations. Surrey Fire is unaware of any wildfires that have occurred in this area as a result of beach fires.

Enhanced Communications

To better inform Surrey residents of non-permissible activities and behaviors while at Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit, City staff will be building awareness through advertisements on local print media, multicultural radio stations, and on social media. A direct mail campaign will also be delivered to reach Crescent Beach residents informing them of the appropriate contacts and agencies that they can report issues to.

In addition, the City will be leveraging its own communication channels to enhance information sharing, including additional messaging on the City's website, social media channels, appropriate e-News channels, and changeable message boards used for special events and specific location communications.

CONCLUSION

The City continues to commit significant resources to ensure ongoing bylaw compliance in Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit. Staff will enhance its communication efforts to ensure that residents and visitors are aware of relevant bylaws governing park usage and contact information to address non-compliance issues.

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Appendix "I" - Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit Area Map
Appendix "II" - Corporate Report No. R075; 2024

Crescent Beach/Blackie Spit Area Map





CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R075

COUNCIL DATE: April 22, 2024

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: April 18, 2024

FROM: General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture
General Manager, Corporate Services FILE: 5460-90 (Gen)

SUBJECT: Crescent Beach Parking and Walking Enhancements Update

RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering, Parks, Recreation & Culture, and Corporate Services Departments recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Authorize staff to proceed with limited parking and walking enhancements in focused locations in Crescent Beach, as described in this report.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide Mayor and Council with updates on unauthorized signage and encroachments in Crescent Beach and feedback received through public consultation on proposed parking and walking enhancements, as well as to seek Council's approval of next steps.

BACKGROUND

On December 18, 2023, Council received Corporate Report No. R223; 2023, attached as Appendix "I", to which Council directed staff to educate Crescent Beach residents on applicable City Bylaws and to subsequently remove unauthorized signs and encumbrances in public road allowance, as well as develop conceptual plans for parking and walking enhancements in Crescent Beach and seek input from the community.

DISCUSSION

Unauthorized Obstructions and Signs

There are approximately 100 properties in Crescent Beach that have unauthorized impediments, such as "private parking" signs, boulders, and landscaping, in the public road allowance that restricts the City's ability to access utilities and maintain roads, as well as restricts the public's use of the road corridor for parking, walking, and cycling. Council directed staff to proceed with the removal of these unauthorized obstructions to alleviate these issues.

There are 45 properties in Crescent Beach with unauthorized “private parking” signs, which staff are issuing notices to residents to remove. Furthermore, there are 57 properties with unauthorized landscaping or structures (such as fences, gates, walls), which staff are currently seeking compliance with the respective owners to remove.

Parking and Walking Enhancements

Conceptual plans were developed for parking and walking enhancements on targeted streets closer to the beach where on-street parking and walking demands are generally higher, particularly where there is no sidewalk for pedestrians. The streets focused for parking and walking enhancements include segments of McBride Avenue, Sullivan Street, Target Street, and Alexandra Street. The concept plans were developed with consideration of the local neighbourhood character, archaeological impacts, impacts to private property, and cost of the proposed improvements. The concept plans developed included formalized parking on the targeted streets through a combination of angled and parallel parking on gravel surfaces, with the paved sidewalks adjacent to the parking areas and a boulevard to separate the parking and walking facilities, where space permits.

Public Engagement

The engagement efforts focused on educating residents regarding Bylaw requirements associated with obstructions and encroachments and seeking residents to remove unauthorized signage/obstructions. As well, staff presented plans for parking and walking enhancements on the targeted streets. Staff undertook engagement efforts using a broad-based approach involving:

- Presentation to the Crescent Beach Property Owner's Association on January 10, 2024;
- Over 600 postcard mailout on road allowance education issued on January 29, 2024 to all properties within Crescent Beach community and broader area;
- Development of a dedicated Crescent Beach Parking and Safety Improvements webpage launched on March 13, 2024
- Public ‘Open-house’ with staff presentation to the 124 attendees on March 13, 2024; and
- Launch of a project survey which was available from March 13, 2024 to April 5, 2024.

The City issued a project survey, which provided facts regarding the parking supply in Crescent Beach, along with proposed improvements to parking and walking on the targeted streets. Feedback was sought and received on the proposed concept plans and included open-ended comment boxes for the public to provide input on the overall initiative to improve parking and walking in Crescent Beach.

Summary of Engagement Responses

The survey received over 150 responses, 90% of whom reside in Crescent Beach, while 10% of respondents were visitors to Crescent Beach. A summary of the survey responses received is provided in Appendix “II”. The survey responses generally align with the feedback received from residents at the public meeting.

Over the various forms of engagement, feedback from local residents was mixed and differentiated when considering modifications to parking versus the need for off-street sidewalks/pathways and accessibility improvements.

Parking Modifications

In regard to parking modifications, residents understood the challenges associated with encumbrances in the road allowance that inadvertently restrict parking and walking improvements. Residents also understood the need for formalized parking on isolated and specific road segments to improve traffic congestion; however, residents were not supportive of increasing overall parking spaces/supply broadly in the community because of concerns that increased parking will attract more visitors, traffic, and public nuisance (litter, noise, beach fires, damage to boulevard, inability to exit driveways, etc.) without a corresponding increase in Bylaw enforcement.

Through the various engagement discussions, local residents suggested the following:

1. Review of existing on-street parking signage (hours, orientation, setbacks, etc.), as it is unclear and inconsistent on a number of streets;
2. Increase way-finding signage to the Blackie Spit parking lots (including gravel overflow) so visitors maximize use of public parking over the use of on-street parking;
3. Consider restricting parking to two hours on Sullivan Street and Beecher Street fronting commercial properties to support local businesses;
4. Consider adding on-street and off-street parking at the vacant City Lot/Park at 12254 Beecher Street (McKenzie Road);
5. Consider restricting parking to three hours or introduce pay parking at Blackie Spit to encourage turnover of parking, acknowledging that this would result in “spill over” parking onto local streets, which residents did not desire unless there was a residential-permit system;
6. Introduce a community shuttle outside of Crescent Beach for visitors, which was previously considered by staff and deemed financially unviable based on a 2022 pilot project in Boundary Bay Park.

Walking Enhancements

In regard to walking and accessibility improvements, residents were generally supportive of off-street asphalt sidewalks/pathways on targeted roads with high combination of vehicle and pedestrian traffic, in order to allow residents opportunities to safely walk without co-mingling with traffic. In addition to improving public safety, this would alleviate traffic during peak hours and improve emergency response.

Suggestions by the public to improve walking and safety in Crescent Beach were on specific road segments, rather than broadly across the community, and included:

1. Completion of sidewalk connections for missing “gaps” along Sullivan Street, particularly west of Kidd Road bus stop and Alexandra tot-park area; and
2. New walkways on Wickson Road, Target Street and Alexandra Street as primary access locations to the beach.

Emergency Services

Staff consulted with Surrey Fire Service, who have expressed concerns over traffic congestion and pedestrian co-mingling on McBride Avenue (north) between Sullivan Street and Blackie Spit parking during peak hours (late evenings, weekends, and summer months). The traffic congestion is primarily as result of McBride Avenue being the sole entrance into Blackie Spit, combined with narrow road width that only accommodates two travel lanes with narrow gravel shoulders where parking is permitted on both sides and there are no sidewalks, which result in pedestrians using the roadway.

To mitigate this issue, parking could be reduced or eliminated on one-side of McBride Avenue and replaced with an off-street pathway for pedestrians. Staff have not solicited feedback from those fronting properties on this proposal and thus staff recommend distributing notices to fronting residents and piloting temporary “No Parking” signs and enforcement on one side of McBride Avenue (north) for Summer 2024 to address public safety, allowing pedestrians to utilize a gravel shoulder, while concurrently seeking feedback as to whether a permanent asphalt pathway should be implemented.

Recommended Parking and Walking Enhancements

Based on the feedback received from the community and discussions with emergency services, staff have developed a balanced approach to improving parking and walking on isolated roads, while not increasing overall parking supply and being cognizant of resident concerns with public nuisance issues in Crescent Beach. The proposed improvements, illustrated in Appendix “III”, are as follows:

1. Review, amendment and updates to existing on-street parking signage to ensure a consistent approach (whether angle or parallel parking is required), adequate sightlines and parking hours, which will include two-hour parking on portions of Sullivan Street and Beecher Street that are in proximity to commercial areas;
2. Increase way-finding signage to the Blackie Spit parking lots (including gravel overflow) at the entrance to Crescent Beach, as well as within Blackie Spit;
3. Minor modifications to the existing gravel overflow parking spaces in Blackie Spit to improve turning movements;
4. Adding on-street parking fronting the vacant City Lot/Park at 12254 Beecher Street (McKenzie Road);
5. Completing sidewalk connections for missing “gaps” along Sullivan Street, particularly west of Kidd Road bus stop and Alexandra tot-park area, to improve accessibility access to the beach area;
6. New accessible walkways on Wickson Road, Target Stret and Alexandra Steet;
7. Pilot temporary “No Parking” on one side of McBride Avenue (north) for Summer 2024; and
8. Develop concept plans for pathways along McBridage Avenue (north) and Kidd Road, between Sullivan Street and Gillery Road to improve walking and access to Crescent Beach and Alexandra tot-park.

Schedule / Timelines

Based on the recommended parking and walking enhancement, the schedule of next steps is:

1. April/May 2024 / Obstruction Removal: Engineering staff to continue removal of unauthorized obstructions and signs within the public road allowance to improve access to utilities and support the public’s use of the road corridor for parking and walking. Bylaw staff will continue to educate area residents of the applicable bylaws and regulations, and issue infraction notices as necessary.
2. May 2024 / Signage Improvements: Engineering staff to install parking signage along streets clarifying areas and times where the public is permitted to park on-street, along with enhancing way finding signage to the Blackie Spit parking lot.
3. June 2024 / Parking and Walking Enhancement: Proceed with parking and walking enhancements on focused areas to the beach and fronting the City-owned park property, which will add 25 on-street parking spaces and provide a continuous walkway from transit stops to and from the beach and parking lot.

4. Ongoing / On-street and Park Parking Supply Demand: Parks and Engineering staff to continue monitoring parking demand during peak periods in Crescent Beach, and the success of these works, to determine if any future work is necessary.

CONCLUSION

Removal of unauthorized obstructions within the public road allowance will support the public's and the City's use of the road allowance. A phased approach to Bylaw enforcement has been undertaken including public information and education efforts and is being followed up by targeted removal of obstructions. Furthermore, staff recommend proceeding with the plan for parking and walking enhancements for certain streets as developed based on public feedback.



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**Note: Appendices available upon request*

Appendix "I" – Corporate Report No. R223; 2023

Appendix "II"-Summary of Survey Responses

Appendix "III" – Recommended Parking and Walking Enhancements