



# Corporate Report

NO: R029

**COUNCIL DATE: March 9, 2009**

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## **REGULAR COUNCIL**

**TO: Mayor & Council** **DATE: February 27, 2009**

**FROM: General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture** **FILE: 6140/20-B**

**SUBJECT: Concept Plan for the Entry Area of Blackie Spit Park**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Approve the Concept Plan illustrated on Appendix B to this report as the design for the entry area at Blackie Spit Park.

## **BACKGROUND**

In August 2007, the City of Surrey took possession of the last two lots that comprise what has been known as Wickson Point, located at the western edge of Blackie Spit Park, northeast of the Crescent Beach Pier. These acquisitions completed this oceanfront destination park that draws visitors from all parts of the Region and draws local residents year-round. It is popular for wildlife viewing, seaside recreation including picnicking, walking, jogging, swimming, and enjoying the remarkable ocean views and sunsets.

The Concept Plan was presented to and supported by the Parks & Community Services Committee at their February 26, 2009 meeting.

## **DISCUSSION**

After the acquisition of the last two lots, staff with the assistance of a consultant, has prepared a Concept Plan for this area as an entrance and social hub for Blackie Spit Park. Catherine Berris and Associates (CBA) were contracted to facilitate the planning and design process. Highlighting the environment and maximizing public use and enjoyment are the primary goals and objectives of the project. CBA had been involved with the City

in preparing the Blackie Spit Park Management Plan in 1999 and the concept design for the entry area compliments this previous work.

A number of site conditions presented challenges for development of the entry area, including:

- Safety issues for pedestrians crossing the road to access the entry area from the parking lot;
- The cul-de-sac detracting from the potential park character;
- A lack of a sense of entry to the Park; and
- A perceived lack of vehicle parking spaces.

Recognizing these challenges, and the surrounding context in mind, staff and consultant team embarked on a 5-step public consultation process.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

A total of five public input opportunities were hosted in 2008 to assist in developing a project Vision and a preferred Concept Plan. The public consultation included interviews, a stakeholder meeting, a presentation, and two Public Open Houses. The Public Open Houses were advertised in accordance with standard City practices for events of this nature, including advertisements in the local newspapers and on the City web page, and by direct mail-outs to local residents.

### **Interviews**

In July of 2008, staff interviewed park users on a busy, sunny, summer weekend to raise interest in the project and to determine priorities for Surrey residents in planning the site.

### **Stakeholder Meeting and Open House No. 1**

Stakeholders for the project include the Crescent Beach Swim Club, Sailing Club, Crescent Beach Property Owners' Association and the South Surrey and White Rock Naturalists. A stakeholder meeting and a Public Open House were held in September 2008 to form a Vision for the site and to determine priorities for the development of the site.

### **Presentation**

Following the first Open House, staff made a presentation to a meeting of the Crescent Beach Property Owner's Association and received additional feedback for the project vision and priorities.

The main results of these four events were that people would like to see open grass space for passive recreation and picnicking, as well as more trees for shade and also native plant gardens. While some respondents preferred open space only, others expressed interest in a structure such as a covered picnic shelter and/or nature interpretive centre.

## **Project Vision**

A vision for the park, crafted from the initial round of public input, informed planning and programming at the entry area:

*The design for this entrance area fosters appreciation of this unique setting, the natural beauty and seascape. It is welcoming to all users; individuals seeking solitude, families, and gatherings for small special events. This entrance area “anchors” Blackie Spit Park by giving it a core use area and a sense of identity.*

## **Open House No. 2**

The main results and vision lead to the development of two alternate Concept Plans for the entry area, and three options for reconfiguration of the parking areas. The plans and options were presented at a Public Open House on November 25, 2008. This event was well attended. Of the 475 residents invited to attend, 49 residents attended in person and 79 residents submitted comment forms as a response to the information available at the meeting or on the City’s website following the meeting. The displays presented at the Open House are attached as Appendix 1.

The Design Concept 1 has a formal design. It includes an open-air shelter that could be utilized for events, picnics, or a nature interpretation centre. A linear path terminates in a special feature area where windsocks or a sculpture could be located. A large natural garden and wall supporting a park sign mark the park entry in this plan version.

The main element of the Design Concept 2 is a large mowed grass lawn, surrounded by a paved pathway stamped like a boardwalk. A nature play area, native plant gardens, and curvilinear pathways for pedestrians are provided. Simple pillars and a park sign mark the entry in this more passive concept plan.

Parking lot configuration and vehicular access are a primary concern for park users and local residents. Three alternate parking options were presented at the second Open House. The first option is the 1999 Master Plan design that maximizes the number of parking stalls available to the public. The second option is a reduced parking lot that suggests most of the overflow parking land be converted to natural area. The third option provides improved efficiency for the south parking lot and a limited number of view parking spaces with a cul-de-sac for pedestrian drop off and turn around on the Spit.

## **PREFERRED CONCEPT PLAN**

The public overwhelmingly supported Design Concept 2 as displayed at the second Open House (94% of residents who had a preference preferred Concept 2). This was largely due to opposition to the shelter proposed in Concept No. 1 due to concerns that the structure would be the site of nuisance behaviour after dark. Participants encouraged the City to provide as much parking as possible for park visitors, citing parking problems in the neighbourhood on weekends. With some minor modifications and additions, Design Concept 2 is recommended as the preferred Concept Plan for the entry area.

Importantly, a beach shower will be provided to alleviate health concerns related to Swimmer's Itch. When funding is available in the long term, the parking lot will be reconfigured to improve efficiency, to provide view parking spaces on the Spit, and to provide a grass overflow lot for times of peak use, thereby reducing the overall gravelled parking area on the Spit.

This Concept Plan was discussed with the Crescent Beach Property Owner's Association on February 4, 2009. There was support for the Plan for the entry area; however, some expressed concerns about parking. Additional consultation with the stakeholders will be required before the detailed design for the parking lot is completed. This will be a future phase of the project.

The preferred Concept Plan for the entry area is attached as Appendix B.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommends that Council approve the Concept Plan illustrated on the attached Appendix B as the design for the entry area at Blackie Spit Park.

Laurie Cavan  
General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture

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Appendix 1: Displays from Open House #2

Appendix 2: Final Concept Plan for the Entrance area at Blackie Spit


## Appendix A—Displays from Open House #2

### Project Purpose

In August of 2007, the City of Surrey took possession of the last two lots that comprise what is known as Wickson Point, located on the west edge of Blackie Spit Park just east of the Crescent Beach Pier. With the acquisition of this land, the City is now preparing a site plan for the point as an entrance and social hub for Blackie Spit Park. Through a series of stakeholder meetings and public consultations, the following vision, goals and objectives, and conceptual design options have been developed.

### Current Issues

- Site is separated from the rest of the park by the wide access road
- Safety issues- crossing the road
- Cul-de-sac detracts from potential character
- Effects of traffic on neighbouring residents
- No sense of entry to the park
- Perceived lack of parking



### Goals and Objectives

**Public Use and Enjoyment**

Design this portion of Blackie Spit Park to support appropriate public use and enjoyment of this unique setting.

- Provide a proper entrance that will serve as a gateway to Blackie Spit Park.
- Provide opportunities for walking, jogging, sitting on benches, biking, bird watching, beach use, and picnicking as the primary activities.
- Explore opportunities for secondary activities potentially including large gatherings, special events, and day camp staging.
- Ensure that the site is an attractive setting, complementary and better connected with the rest of the park.
- Maximize the panoramic view opportunities towards the ocean.
- Minimize the influence of road traffic on the site.
- Discourage inappropriate use by encouraging legitimate park users and by design based on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- Design this site and the area around it to better define use patterns and to minimize the potential for use conflicts.
- Improve the safety within this portion of Blackie Spit Park.


### Vision

*The design for this point fosters appreciation of this unique setting, the natural beauty and seascape. It is welcoming to all users: individuals seeking solitude, families, and gatherings for special events. This point "anchors" Blackie Spit Park by giving it a core use area and a sense of identity.*


### Public Consultation Results

In September 2008, a stakeholder meeting and a public open house were held to obtain input for the design. The main results, based on 49 comment forms, were:

- People would like to see open grass space for passive recreation and picnicking, as well as more trees for shade and native plant gardens.
- While some respondents preferred open space only, others expressed interest in a structure that could be a covered picnic shelter and/or nature interpretive centre.



Activities pursued in or near the area



Facilities people would like to see provided

### Environmental

Respect and complement the environmental resources of Blackie Spit Park.


- Explore potential nature and heritage interpretation and wildlife-viewing opportunities.
- Base all new park development on sound environmental principles, e.g. stormwater infiltration, responsible use of water, wind as feature or generator.

Blackie Spit Park Entrance Area Concept Plan: Public Open House November 25, 2008


CATHERINE BERRIS ASSOCIATES Inc.  
Landscape Architectural Firm

### Design Concept 1


### Precedents




Picnic shelter/ gathering place

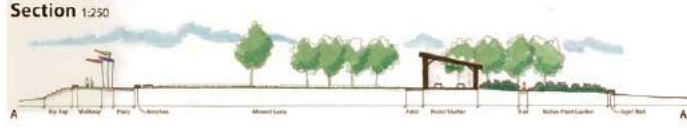


Mowed grass and shade trees





Entrance View



Section 1:250

Blackie Spit Park Entrance Area Concept Plan: Public Open House November 25, 2008

CATHERINE BERRIS ASSOCIATES Inc.  
Landscape Architectural Firm

# Blackie Spit **Design Concept 2**



### Precedents



### Section 1:250



Blackie Spit Park Entrance Area Concept Plan: Public Open House

November 25, 2008

CATHERINE BEHRIS ASSOCIATES INC.  
Landscape Architecture • Urban Design

# Blackie Spit **Parking Options**

Existing parking areas lack organization, take up park space, and are unsafe for pedestrians



### Master Plan Parking Lot Design



The Blackie Spit Park Master Plan, completed in 1999, recommended:

- Reorganization and extension of southern parking lot with painted lines and islands of plantings.
- Reduction and reorganization of northern parking lot also with painted lines and islands of plantings.

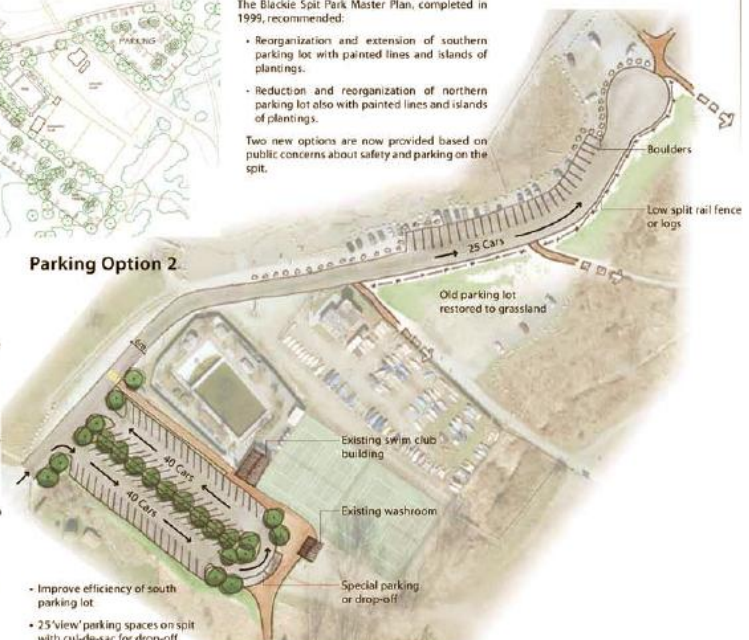
Two new options are now provided based on public concerns about safety and parking on the spit.

### Parking Option 1



- Improve efficiency of south parking lot
- Cul-de-sac for drop-off and sailing club access

### Parking Option 2



- Improve efficiency of south parking lot
- 25 'view' parking spaces on spit with cul-de-sac for drop-off

Blackie Spit Park Entrance Area Concept Plan: Public Open House

November 25, 2008

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## Appendix B-- Final Concept Plan for the Entrance area at Blackie Spit.



Blackie Spit Entrance Area Concept Plan