

TO: MAYOR & COUNCIL

FROM: DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND
CULTURE

SUBJECT: RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN BURNABY PARKS

PURPOSE: To seek Council direction regarding the development of a pilot program to allow for the consumption of alcohol in select City of Burnaby parks.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council direct staff to develop a pilot program to allow for alcohol consumption in select City of Burnaby parks for the 2023 summer season,
2. **THAT** Council direct staff to work with the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission on the evaluation of the pilot program allowing for alcohol consumption in parks, and bring a full report with recommendations forward for Council's consideration.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS

I concur with the recommendation of the Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

A program to allow for alcohol consumption in select City parks is authorized under the British Columbia *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* (s. 73) and related regulation (s. 197, *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*) ("Act and Regulation"), which authorizes the City to designate a public place, or part of a public place, over which the City has jurisdiction as a place where liquor may be consumed by the public. The Act and Regulation require the public place or places to be designated by bylaw and the bylaw to include certain conditions and requirements.

2.0 BACKGROUND

At the April 21, 2021, Regular Council meeting, Council received correspondence regarding the feasibility of allowing the consumption of alcohol in city parks. The correspondence was subsequently forwarded to staff with the direction to bring forward a future report regarding the feasibility of such a program. At the April 24, 2023, Regular Council meeting, Councillor Calendino inquired further regarding the possibility of a program in Burnaby.

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the importance of parks as highly valued outdoor spaces that support recreation and community connectedness. They provide important opportunities for participation in outdoor recreation, physical activity, relaxation and social connection.

To further enhance residents' enjoyment of parks, many local municipalities including Vancouver, New Westminster, North Vancouver, Delta and Port Coquitlam, adopted bylaws through the pandemic that allowed for the responsible consumption of alcohol in designated parks. Over the past 2 years, these municipalities have generally had positive experiences, with few concerns or issues arising during that time. Given this success, the City of Vancouver recently made their program permanent and expanded the number of locations where alcohol consumption is allowed.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The development of a pilot program in Burnaby would require several considerations. Selection criteria to determine which parks would be designated for alcohol consumption would be required. This criterion would include factors such as:

- Size and layout of the space to ensure there is space for designated areas without interfering with other park activities,
- Accessibility to ensure sites are easily accessible and near public transportation,
- Existing ancillary amenities such as washrooms, seating areas and waste disposals, and
- Safety, such as lighting and visibility.

There are also several operational impacts that would need to be explored and considered including hours of operation, public communications, waste management and monitoring for public safety.

A bylaw for Council's consideration would need to be developed for the pilot program, in accordance with the Act and Regulation. This bylaw would:

- identify the City parks and area(s) within these City parks where alcohol consumption by the public will be allowed;
- set out the hours during which alcohol may be consumed in these designated areas;
- require signage to be posted setting out the boundaries of the designated areas and the permitted hours;
- set out the number and size requirements for the signage and how they are to be posted; and
- other regulations as appropriate to promote responsible behaviour.

In order to deter violations of bylaw requirements, the Burnaby Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw will need to be amended to authorize issuing bylaw violation notices and imposing penalties for non-compliance with the bylaw.

Should Council wish to adopt such a program for the 2023 summer season, staff would prioritize this work with the goal of presenting the bylaw and program in June.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff would initiate a public consultation process to also run concurrently during the pilot program. This would allow residents to provide feedback on the program as well as identify any challenges that may arise.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are additional costs that would be incurred to initiate a pilot program including signage, additional waste totes and public engagement surveys and analysis. Other municipalities with similar programs have also identified ongoing operating costs including sign maintenance and repairs, increased waste management costs, and bylaw patrols and visits. These costs would be absorbed within existing budgets for the purposes of the pilot program. Actual costs would be tracked to inform future decision making and including in future operating budget requests.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Gonzalez, Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Carmen Gonzalez, Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture, and reviewed by Mary Morrison-Clark, GM Parks, Recreation and Culture, Dave Critchley, GM Community Safety, May Leung, City Solicitor, and Steve Bruneau, Director Parks.