

Re: Delineation of the Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area
(Item 23, Report No. 86, December 30, 1974)

On December 30, 1974, Council received a report on the proposed delineation of the Burnaby Mountain conservation area. Council on that date requested additional information which is contained in the following report from the Director of Planning.

Because the sketches showing the boundaries and various holdings are oversized, they are attached only to those reports that are submitted to Council. Copies for the public are available at the Planning Department.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Director of Planning's recommendations be adopted.

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Planning Department,
June 2, 1975
Our File #15.153

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER
FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

RE: DELINEATION OF BURNABY MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AREA.

A. BACKGROUND

At a Special Meeting on July 2, 1974, the Municipal Council, as part of its consideration of the document Public Meetings - Phase One, approved in principle the establishment of an conservation area on Burnaby Mountain. A further report recommending a specific delineation boundary for the conservation area was submitted to Council at its meeting of December 30, 1974. Council gave consideration to this matter and requested the following additional information:

1. Larger scale maps defining the boundaries as proposed showing clearly the streets and boundaries of private holdings.
2. The value of lands and amount that could be residential.
3. The value of lands in suggested land exchange in the proposed area.
4. The elevation at Capitol Hill, Crest area and Central Park for comparative purposes.

It is the purpose of this report to provide this requested additional information to help resolve the conservation area boundary in order that implementation measures and the development of those lands immediately adjacent and below the conservation area may commence in an orderly manner.

B. CONSERVATION CONCEPT OVERVIEW

As indicated previously in the Public Meetings - Phase One report, the series of public meetings associated with that report exemplified the growing awareness concerning the need to conserve areas with exceptional natural characteristics suited for public use and enjoyment. Many of the

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residents participating in the program expressed frustration at the deterioration of some of the more traditional elements identifiable within the community that are gradually disappearing as a result of continual growth and change. It was in this vein that the conservation concept for Burnaby Mountain was advanced with the intent to conserve the familiar open space areas of the Mountain traditionally recognized as a landmark feature within the Region and Municipality.

It was also indicated, however, within that same document that other undeveloped areas under public ownership were more appropriate for residential development and should be designated as such. Areas included within this category are the Stride Avenue area, Cariboo Hill, the lowland regions of Burnaby Mountain including the Burnaby 200 area, the Phillips-Lougheed area, McInnes Place and those holdings west of Robert Burnaby Park. The development of these public lands and other undeveloped private holdings together with the redevelopment of the existing urban areas of the Municipality (e. g. Kingsway Metrotown) is regarded as the means of accommodating future growth projected for this Municipality. It is our belief that residential expansion into the "developable" portions of Burnaby Mountain generally above the 500' contour would be an irreversible commitment frustrating its retention as an open space landmark that would not substantially contribute to the solving of long term Regional or Municipal growth demands. Any major encroachment of residential development above the recommended conservation area boundary would compromise an invaluable asset of long term public benefit.

The Livable Region Plan 1976/1986 Report prepared by the Greater Vancouver Regional District shares the conviction that Burnaby Mountain is a valuable asset of Regional significance that should be held for conservation and recreation purposes. This report states in part:

"Burnaby has two of our top priorities for recreation development by 1986, Burnaby Mountain and Burnaby Lake. There have been many proposals for housing on Burnaby Mountain. From our perspective, it is essential that any housing be limited and shaped to respect the Region-wide importance of preserving the Mountain's scenic and recreational capabilities. It is a landmark for much of Greater Vancouver. Burnaby Mountain has long been considered appropriate for a regional park. Now, with increasing numbers of people expected to live in Burnaby, it is vital to preserve the visible slopes and crest of the Mountain for public use. We strongly support Burnaby Council's recent decision to designate Burnaby Mountain as a conservation area and urge that remaining lands on the Mountain be held for conservation and recreation with the Open Space Conservancy."

Given this restatement of the general conservation area objective for background purposes, the following provides Council with the requested additional information that gives an indication as to the acquisition values and development costs associated with the potential expansion of residential development above the proposed conservation area boundary to supplement our previous report of December 18, 1974.

C. GENERALIZED SERVICE COSTS AND LAND VALUE

As outlined in our previous report dated April 8, 1975 concerning the proposed Burnaby 200 project on the south slope of Burnaby Mountain, the Planning Department in collaboration with the Province has submitted a preliminary Community Plan for the subject area that has integrated the proposed conservation area boundary. (see attached figure A). Further details and clarification concerning the implementation of the proposed Community Plan and the resulting possible land transaction that can occur in implementing the preliminary plan has been concurrently submitted as a separate report item. In attempting to therefore arrive at an approximate value of those hypothetically developable lands above the proposed conservation area boundary, attention has been directed to the western slopes of the Mountain where the ownership pattern is more diverse and where the majority of discussion concerning the proposed delineation has been directed.

Estimates for the servicing and production of residential lots and the anticipated revenues have been obtained to provide a "raw land" value for the west slope area. In helping define a hypothetical development area in this vicinity above the proposed conservation area boundary, the Engineer has indicated that development could be accommodated up to the 700 ft. contour level with the provision of a comprehensive water distribution system. The lands affected by such a system lie between the proposed conservation area boundary and 700 ft. contour level and approximate some 161 acres. These lands and the relative extent of Municipal holdings are shown on the attached figure B.

For the purposes of this preliminary estimate, the 161 acres in question have been itemized on the following basis in consistency with other areas exhibiting similar topographical characteristics:

<u>Allocated Use</u>	<u>Acres (approx.)</u>
Open space, parks, natural water courses	35
School site	7
Roads	18
Community Facilities	1
Residential (R2 Single Family)	<u>100</u>
Total Area	161

Assuming this allocation and a net density figure of 4.0 units per acre consistent with R2 development guidelines prevalent in adjacent areas, the Municipal Engineer has provided preliminary servicing estimates that have enabled the Land Agent to provide an estimate of the value of those lands between the proposed conservation area boundary and the 700 ft. contour elevation. On the basis of the servicing costs estimated for this area (approximately \$43,000 per acre including a distributed amount of \$750,000 for water supply), the Land Agent has advised that the present worth of the 161 acres (approximately 129 acres of Municipal property and roadways and 32 acres of private holdings) is approximately \$3.56 million. This estimate assumes collective and willing consolidation by all property owners in the area and immediate development capability.

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The value of the lands has been derived from the anticipated costs and revenues related to the development of the 161 acres. In the event such a development were to be staged over a 5 year period, as is more likely the case, then the Land Agent advises that the value would diminish to an estimated \$2.3 million due to an allowance for cost investment opportunities. Included within the Land Agent's estimates are allowances for interim financing, the developer's profit and commission for the sale of the resultant lots.

It should be stated that the value of \$3.56 million does not reflect the estimated cost that would be associated with the public acquisition of these lands in the event that the Municipality were not an existing owner in the area. In such an instance the Municipality could anticipate an acquisition cost substantially greater than \$3.56 million due to the plurality of individual owners and the varied claims for compensation. In this sense, the conservation concept provides for the retention of an irreplaceable public asset whose acquisition cost would exceed its value for residential development purposes as described above.

Not taken into account in the presentation of the land value figure requested by Council are the long term cost revenue ramifications that would result from the introduction of residential development in this area. The Municipal Treasurer has provided a cost-revenue statement for the year 1973 for a newly constructed R2 single family dwelling (at 7625 Sapperton St.) which was felt to be typical of that form of residential development. By assuming an average occupancy ratio of 3.95 persons for the dwelling, the cost of services provided by the Municipality exceeded the yield from taxes paid by \$599.70. This deficit position would be compounded by the number of units exhibiting similar characteristics. The inclusion of this information is not meant to suggest that single family development in this Municipality should be curtailed. This department firmly believes that the addition of single family units in the Municipality is essential in maintaining a proper balance of housing types within the Municipality. However, this information is applicable if deliberations concerning the conservation area boundary are restricted solely to economic terms. If the land use disposition of these lands were regarded solely on the basis of cost revenue considerations, then it is conceivable, as exemplified above, that any short term economic gain realized by the Municipality as the result of a sale of its portion of lands above the proposed conservation area boundary would be negated by the longer term accumulative effect of the Municipal deficits generated by this form of development. More important, however, is the fact that the Municipality and the Region would be relinquishing an irreplaceable public asset which could not be recovered at any cost while at the same time not substantially contributing to the solving of Municipal or Regional housing demands.

D. ESTIMATED ACQUISITION COSTS

On the west slope of Burnaby Mountain, there are two general areas that can be differentiated for the purposes of acquisition estimates. The first area relates to those lands north of Curtis St., east of the proposed conservation area boundary and west of Arden Avenue. This area has been the subject of a gradual Municipal land assembly program which has helped round out the large Municipal holdings in the area. The Land Agent has estimated that the value of the properties remaining under private

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ownership within this area is approximately \$905,100 (as at July 31, 1975). As previously outlined in our report item dated December 18, 1974, the current Capital Improvement Program has allocated a sum of \$250,000 for land assembly in this area.

The second area of proposed acquisitions associated with the conservation area proposal are those private holdings south of Curtis St. north and east of the proposed conservation boundary and west of Arden Avenue. As can be seen from the attached figure C, the Municipality is presently not a majority owner in this area. The Land Agent has also provided an estimate of acquiring the private holdings in this area, excepting three dwellings and their immediate lots, which approximates \$1.15 million for the 18.2 acres involved. The acquisition of the three dwellings is not considered as an immediate priority in implementing the conservation concept and consequently their acquisition is considered a longer term objective.

From the above, it is apparent that the total acquisition costs for the private holdings on the west slopes of Burnaby Mountain within the proposed conservation area approximates \$2,055,000.

E. ACQUISITION APPROACH

As was previously outlined, the current Capital Improvement Program has allocated a sum of \$250,000 for land assembly for the west slope of Burnaby Mountain encompassing those private holdings in the area generally bounded by Curtis St., Arden Ave., Pandora St. and Phillips Ave. . To facilitate the gradual acquisition and consolidation of those private properties on the west slope of Burnaby Mountain within the proposed conservation area, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT Council designate that area illustrated on the attached figure D as the Burnaby Mountain West Slope Conservation Assembly Area. Private properties within this area are proposed for acquisition on a gradual basis, as they become available, for conservation area purposes.

The Tax Sale Monies Fund which is used primarily to help finance the acquisition of properties for Municipal purposes is replenished on a continuing basis by the development and sale of other Municipal lands which are considered appropriate and timely for development. In order to supplement initial funds available for acquisition of private properties above the proposed conservation area boundary, IT IS RECOMMENDED that a further report relating to the proposed servicing and sale of undeveloped Municipal property on Queenstone Court be prepared for the consideration of Council. This

particular area by virtue of its proximity to adjacent existing R2 development can be readily serviced and is situated immediately below the proposed conservation area boundary. On the basis of a preliminary servicing estimated provided by Engineering and assuming current market values, the Municipality could likely expect revenues in the order of \$500,000 from the development and sale of the 18 residential lots at this locale. In addition, the development would reflect the proposed conservation area implementation. The proposed pattern of subdivision for this area is outlined on the attached figure E. Other areas under Municipal ownership immediately below the conservation area boundary are recommended for development on a programmed basis reflecting the subdivision pattern as outlined on figure C.

The anticipated revenues generated from the development and sale of the Queenstone Court property coupled with the monies currently contained within the Capital Improvement Program would amount to \$750,000. These monies could provide the basis for initiating on a priority basis

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the gradual land assembly program. This land assembly approach on a programmed basis is regarded as a more pragmatic alternative to a general land exchange program. On a subsequent review, it is considered that a land exchange program for the area is less appropriate due to factors such as serviced lot availability, the determination of relative values and the satisfaction of individual preferences. In view of this, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the C.I.P. Committee be instructed to confirm the existing policy of gradual acquisition on the west slope of Burnaby Mountain and to include adequate funds within the Program in order that continued gradual acquisition of private holdings within the West Slope Conservation Assembly Area can occur as they become available.

On the basis of the strong Regional support indicated for this particular conservation objective, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT representations be made to the Greater Vancouver Regional District for their support for an application to the Province for greenbelt acquisition assistance within the Burnaby Mountain West Slope Conservation Assembly Area on a high priority basis. Funds obtained from this and other sources would proportionantly reduce the anticipated acquisition cost associated with the assembly of the private holdings within the West Slope Conservation Assembly Area.

F. COMPARATIVE ELEVATIONS WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY

As requested by Council, the following topographical elevations are provided for Capitol Hill, the Crest area and Central Park for comparative purposes:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Peak Elevation</u>
Capitol Hill	745'
Crest area	500'
Central Park	515'
Burnaby Mountain	1300'

As can be seen from the above figures, the Crest and Central Park area elevations approximate the lower limits of the proposed conservation area boundary. In the case of the Capitol Hill area, residential development has been accommodated by the provision of a separate water distribution system for the area which has resulted in development to the upper most areas of the Hill. The Capitol Hill area was in fact cited on many occasions by the public meetings participants as exemplifying a likely "before and after" prospect for Burnaby Mountain if conservation measures are not adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS


On the basis of the information provided above, together with our previous report of December 30, 1974, IT IS RECOMMENDED

1. THAT Council adopt the proposed conservation area boundary as shown on the attached figures B and C.
2. THAT Council designate that area illustrated on the attached figure D as the Burnaby Mountain West Slope Conservation Assembly Area.
3. THAT the Capital Improvement Committee be instructed to include adequate funds within the Program in order that gradual acquisition of private holdings

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within the West Slope Conservation Assembly Area can occur as they become available.

4. THAT a further report relating to the proposed servicing and sale of undeveloped Municipal property on Queenstone Court be prepared for the consideration of Council.
5. THAT representations be made to the Greater Vancouver Regional District for their support on a priority basis for an application to the Province for greenbelt acquisition assistance within the Burnaby Mountain West Slope Conservation Assembly Area.
6. THAT a further report concerning the proposed rezoning of the Trans Mountain tank farm property from M3 (Heavy Industrial) to M7a (Petroleum Product Storage) be advanced for the consideration of Council.
7. THAT the Planning Department be authorized to process subdivision applications for the "lowland" development areas on the west slope of Burnaby Mountain on the basis of the development guidelines as represented on the attached figure C.


A. L. Parr,
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING.

JSB:ew
att.

c.c. Municipal Engineer
Municipal Treasurer
Land Agent