

TO: CITY MANAGER July 17, 2001

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: **BURRARD INLET ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAM (BIEAP)**
BURRARD INLET MANAGEMENT PLAN

PURPOSE: To provide feedback on the Draft Consolidated Environmental Management Plan for Burrard Inlet.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program and to the Environment and Waste Management Committee.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

A wide range of agencies and individuals affect the health and management of Burrard Inlet. The Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program (BIEAP) was established in 1991 to provide a one-window management framework to protect and improve the environmental quality of Burrard Inlet. BIEAP is an inter-agency partnership involving Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Vancouver Port Authority, and the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Over the past year, BIEAP has been developing a Consolidated Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for Burrard Inlet. The Plan seeks to consolidate all existing environmental management documents and provide a coordinated management approach for Burrard Inlet. City of Burnaby staff have worked with BIEAP in guiding Plan development to ensure coordination with City plans and programs. BIEAP has conducted two public working sessions as part of Plan development (October 2000 and June 2001). City staff and Councillors attended these events.

In May 2001, BIEAP prepared a preliminary draft Plan, and circulated the document to municipalities, the public, stakeholders, and agencies for comments. The following report provides an overview of the draft Plan and recommends comments to be forwarded to BIEAP. BIEAP will use the comments to revise and finalize the Plan.

2.0 CONTENT OF THE CONSOLIDATED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The CEMP provides an overview of existing management within the Inlet. The draft Plan summarizes future objectives and actions under the following four key goals:

1. Improve water quality in Burrard Inlet;
2. Minimize the ecological and human health effects associated with historical contamination;
3. Achieve a net gain of productive fish and wildlife habitat to maintain and enhance the natural biodiversity of Burrard Inlet; and
4. Achieve human and economic development activities that enhance the environmental quality of Burrard Inlet.

The draft Plan lists objectives under each goal, along with actions to support achievement of the goals. Actions include Inlet-wide actions, and sub-area specific actions. The City of Burnaby falls within the Central Harbour sub-area. One or more lead agencies are identified to undertake each action. Table 1 in Attachment 1 lists the Plan's goals and objectives, along with proposed actions for the entire Inlet and Central Harbour.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS OF THE DRAFT PLAN FOR CITY

The Plan is a broad policy-level document. Its goals for environmental protection and management are closely compatible with the City's environmental goals as outlined in the Official Community Plan. The draft Plan should clarify the environmental management structure within Burrard Inlet for individuals working in and around the Inlet.

As Council is aware, the City is preparing a management plan for its Burrard Inlet Foreshore and upland areas. A draft of this plan will be presented to Council later this year. The content of the BIEAP draft plan is compatible with the preliminary directives identified to date in the City plan. The City plan is cross referenced within the draft BIEAP plan, with BIEAP agreeing to work collaboratively with the City in developing land use plans.

While the direction of the draft BIEAP plan is supportable, staff believe that the plan could be strengthened in the following key areas:

1. ***The Plan requires more contextual or background information as it relates to existing environmental conditions within the Inlet.*** The Plan should make a clearer statement of existing conditions related to ecological health and integrity to establish a clear biophysical baseline to which the plan's goals and objectives can relate. Such information will help illustrate any trends that may be occurring. Problem areas should be cited, frequency of exceedences noted and a clearer characterization of species composition, abundance and population trends. This information should help BIEAP to prioritize future actions.
2. ***The Plan should identify how existing management and education programs have impacted environmental trends within the Inlet.*** Management actions are intended to address specific environmental issues within the Inlet. In addition to listing management programs, the draft Plan should cite information on the respective successes or challenges facing existing programs (for example, how much habitat has been created compared with lost through the habitat compensation area scheme?). Again, this information should help BIEAP prioritize future actions.
3. ***The Plan should clarify which agencies will undertake which tasks over which time periods to implement the actions.*** While some actions are quite specific, others are more general in nature. For example, action 1.2 on page 62 is to "Improve water quality at recreational swimming beaches and work to eliminate public beach closures". If possible, each action should include specific tasks and lead agencies as well as a timeframe and resources required. The Plan is only attainable, if agencies are indeed prepared to fund implementation of each action. This approach would allow different agencies to plan and budget as necessary.
4. ***The Plan needs to more explicitly acknowledge the role of inter-governmental cooperation.*** As the managers of the land base within the watershed, local governments have a critical role in environmental management, Inter-governmental cooperation and communication is such a fundamental issue that it is worthy of a distinct goal within the plan.

In addition to these broad comments, staff have many editorial suggestions to improve the content of the text, graphics, and actions. These comments will be forwarded directly to BIEAP.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Environmental management crosses numerous jurisdictional boundaries and agency responsibilities. BIEAP is to be commended for seeking to clarify the complicated management structure within Burrard Inlet. City staff support the direction of the draft CEMP, but recommend that the plan be strengthened by providing more factual contextual information on the Inlet and existing programs, providing implementation details on each action item, and explicitly acknowledging the important links between the agencies required for plan implementation. It is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program and to the Environment and Waste Management Committee.



J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

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cc: Director Engineering
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Goal	Objective	Inlet-wide Actions	Central Harbour Actions
1. Improve water quality in Burrard Inlet	<p>Reduce the levels of contaminants entering Burrard Inlet's marine and freshwater systems to improve environmental quality and ecological health</p> <p>Limit the potential for adverse impacts from future discharges to the environment.</p>	<p>1.1 Coordinate liquid waste management in Burrard Inlet</p> <p>1.2 Review the provincial permit discharge standards for industrial wastes authorized under the Waste Management Act</p> <p>1.3 Support the provincial initiative on vessel sewage to designate "no dumping zones" in Burrard Inlet</p> <p>1.4 Explore the potential for partnership between BIEAP and the GVRD's air quality improvement program.</p> <p>1.5 Encourage efforts to improve stormwater and non-point source pollution management</p> <p>1.6 Develop an enhanced Best Management Practice program and strengthen partnerships with the industrial sector.</p> <p>1.7 Ensure the development and implementation of a coordinated ambient water quality monitoring program in Burrard Inlet.</p>	
2. Minimize the ecological and human health effects associated with historical contamination	Provide options for historical contamination in Burrard Inlet	<p>2.1 Use a risk-based approach for the remediation of historical lands and sediment in Burrard Inlet</p> <p>2.2 Develop a remediation strategy for False Creek</p>	

Goal	Objective	Inlet-wide Actions	Central Harbour Actions
<p>3. Achieve a net gain of productive fish and wildlife habitat to maintain and enhance the natural biodiversity of Burrard Inlet</p>	<p>Identify sites for future habitat protection, rehabilitation, restoration and enhancement</p>	<p>3.1 Protect and enhance existing protected sites in Burrard Inlet</p> <p>3.2 Assist in the Greater Vancouver Biodiversity Conservation Pilot Study by identifying areas of ecological significance for future protection and enhancement in the Burrard Inlet ecosystem.</p> <p>3.3 Use legislative tools such as Marine Protected Area, Wildlife Management Areas and ecological corridors to protect and enhance valuable areas in the Burrard Inlet ecosystem.</p> <p>3.4 Coordinate and provide support and technical expertise to community stewardship programs that engage in projects designed to improve the environment.</p>	<p>3.1 Encourage and protect natural lengths of shoreline vegetation in the Central Harbour.</p>
<p>4. Achieve human and economic development activities that enhance the environmental quality of Burrard Inlet</p>	<p>Maintain and, where practical, improve the environment to provide for quality recreational opportunities</p> <p>Pursue environmental objectives in development planning and land management</p>	<p>4.1 Develop recreation access guidelines to encourage environmentally appropriate recreational activities in all areas of the Inlet.</p> <p>4.2 Identify areas to enable habitat compensation banking</p> <p>4.3 Provide support to municipal, regional and port planning initiatives along the shoreline and in adjoining watersheds.</p> <p>4.4 Update and promote the BIEAP Shoreline Development Guidelines</p> <p>4.5 Develop pilot projects in cooperation with the public and private sectors to showcase innovative environmentally sensitive design.</p>	<p>4.1 Assist the Vancouver Port Authority and DFO in identifying sites for future habitat compensation banks.</p> <p>4.2 Support the Cities of Vancouver and Burnaby by working collaboratively with their municipal land use planning initiatives, and help to develop community environmental plans that correspond with BIEAP's environmental goals for Burrard Inlet.</p>