

**TO:** CITY MANAGER

2005 January 05

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

**SUBJECT:** REZONING REFERENCE #04-29C  
229 Hythe Avenue North (Capitol Hill Reservoir Park)  
Response to Issues Raised at Public Hearing

**PURPOSE:** To provide Council with a response to issues raised at the Public Hearing for Rezoning Reference #04-29c.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** Council approve the proposed CPTED measures, as outlined in Section 3.0 of this report.
2. **THAT** Council authorize the resubmission of Second Reading of the Bylaw for Rezoning Reference #04-29c on the understanding that Third Reading and Final Reading of the Bylaw would not be advanced until the completion and assessment of the 2005 August monitoring period.
3. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the area residents that raised issues at the Public Hearing for Rezoning Reference #04-29c at 229 Hythe Avenue North or attended the public consultation meeting on 2004 December 15.
4. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission.

**R E P O R T**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

The rezoning of Capitol Hill Reservoir Park at 229 Hythe Avenue North (see *attached* Sketch #1) was brought forward to bring the zoning of the park into conformance with its intended use. At the Public Hearing for Rezoning Reference #04-29c, held 2004 August 24, three area residents submitted letters and six appeared before Council to raise concerns regarding the rezoning of Capitol Hill Reservoir Park from the R2 Residential District to P3 Park and Public Use District.

Some common concerns of the residents in relation to the park included a reduction in privacy, alleged illegal activities and general disturbances. It was mentioned that the park area had become a congregation point for youth in the evenings, with reports of frequent alcohol and drug use. The RCMP has been notified of the disturbances and alleged drug and

alcohol use, but residents state that this had not deterred the youth from congregating. Residents that appeared before Council requested that enforcement be increased and remedial measures taken to curtail the congregation and disturbances. Remedial measures suggested by residents included erecting noise barriers, increasing lighting, activating sprinklers at night or possibly even the sale of the parkland for residential purposes.

At its regular meeting of 2004 September 13, Council requested that staff prepare a report on the issues raised by area residents with regard to criminal activities in Capitol Hill Reservoir Park. This report addresses that request.

## 2.0 HISTORY OF CAPITOL HILL RESERVOIR PARK

In 1991, the Engineering Department-Public Works Division determined that the Capitol Hill Reservoir was no longer required, and that the area surrounding the pump station was surplus City property. In line with this determination, a preliminary subdivision plan was prepared as part of Subdivision Reference #41/91 for the consolidation and landscaping enhancement of the unopened Cambridge Street right-of-way, as well as the creation of five single-family R2 Residential District lots fronting on Hythe Avenue North.

At that time, a letter was received from Mr. Arthur Quan, Chair of the Northwest Capitol Hill Neighbourhood Association, requesting that the former reservoir land be designated and enhanced as a public park and not subdivided into residential lots, as it provided the neighbourhood with an invaluable view corridor.

At its meeting of 1995 October 02, Council tabled a report from this Department recommending the closure of the Cambridge Street right-of-way and the subdivision of the remaining reservoir land. Council requested that staff work with the Capitol Hill Neighbourhood Association and prepare a report in response to the Association's request to designate the reservoir land for park use. A needs study, conducted by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, determined that although the area was well served by parkland, the view potential of this site was significant. Therefore, as a result of discussions with the Capitol Hill Neighbourhood Association, a modified park approach was pursued, culminating in the current configuration of the formal park area with two subdivided residential lots to the north. Council adopted a report dated 1996 October 23 recommending that it approve the revised land use configuration for Capitol Hill reservoir lands.

It has been since reported that even before improvements were made to the park area in the 1990's, the reservoir was a congregation area for youth in the evenings. The excessive noise, rowdiness, parking, speeding and reported illegal activities have created conflicts with area residents that has culminated in the delegation which opposed the rezoning of the park on 2004 August 24.

### 3.0 DISCUSSION

The subdivision of the Capitol Hill Reservoir land for residential purposes has been mentioned by some adjacent residents and would likely reduce the negative issues related to after hours park use. However, in light of the City's investment in the park area, the process undertaken with residents of the Northwest Capitol Hill Neighbourhood Association to reach a consensus and the benefits this park provides in terms of a view corridor for residents and visitors of Capitol Hill, this is not a recommended option. It is recommended that at this time remedial measures be pursued to mitigate inappropriate after hours usage of the park area, and that second reading be given to Rezoning Reference #04-29c.

Staff have been working with the RCMP to reduce inappropriate after hours park use and alleged illegal activities. On 2004 November 19, a special meeting with members of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Committee, City parking enforcement and Parks staff representing maintenance and community development was convened on site to outline potential remedial measures for the park. The following issues and actions were identified as a result of this meeting.

#### 3.1 Issue #1 - Traffic and Parking

Reports have been made of illegal parking, excessive traffic and speeding along Hythe Avenue North, particularly in the evenings. Currently there are parking restrictions on both sides of Hythe Avenue North with no stopping permitted between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Hythe Avenue North has been improved with a standard curb and gutter on both sides and an abutting sidewalk on the east side. The roadway has been narrowed extensively from 8m (26.24 ft.) of pavement at Cambridge Street and Hythe Avenue North to approximately 6m (19.68 ft.) north of the park, which continues on to a cul-de-sac. Adjacent to the roadway on the west side of Hythe Avenue North, stone barriers have been placed to discourage parking on the grass.

Although traffic and parking issues were considered in the design and construction of Hythe Avenue North, north of Cambridge Street, additional measures to control traffic and parking are suggested for the site. It has been determined that the best approach to the traffic and parking problem is through incremental steps, before more cost intensive traffic calming infrastructure is considered.

As the initial step, it is proposed that temporary no-post barriers be installed on the existing pavement 1.5 m from the existing curb edge along the frontage of the park and that the existing no stopping (11:00 p.m.- 7:00 a.m.) signs be replaced with no stopping signs, regardless of time. To control unwanted traffic in the area additional "No Exit" signs would be erected north of the park along Hythe Avenue North. In addition, signage indicating a 30km/h speed zone adjacent to the park would be installed.

If these measures are considered not to be successful after a trial period ending in August 2005 and speeding remains a problem on Hythe Avenue North, then speed bumps could be installed adjacent to the park. A third approach could be the installation of a corner bulge at Hythe Avenue North and Cambridge Street to restrict traffic. However, as Hythe Avenue North terminates in a cul-de-sac, this may cause fire access issues. If these incremental measures are not successful at deterring congregation, parking and speeding, permanent traffic calming infrastructure such as extending the curb 1.5 m into the street, could be pursued in the future.

*It is therefore recommended that*

- *no post barriers on the existing pavement 1.5m from the west side of Hythe Avenue North along the frontage of the park be installed,*
- *the existing no stopping (11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) signs be relaxed with no stopping signs, regardless of time*
- *additional No Exit signage be erected at the north of the park and*
- *signage indicating a 30km/h speed zone adjacent to the park be installed.*

### **3.2 Issue #2 - Illegal Activity and Violence**

Allegations of illegal drug and alcohol use on the site, in addition to fighting amongst youth and verbal conflicts with residents, has created issues of safety in the park and the surrounding area. Residents have reported such incidences to the RCMP.

Options raised by residents to control inappropriate congregation in the park include installing sprinklers that activate in the evening. However, similar measures in other areas have lead to vandalism of sprinkler heads. Increased lighting was suggested by both residents and the members of the CPTED committee. It is felt that the installation of low site lighting may encourage park use in the evenings, but improved street lighting on the east side of Hythe Avenue North may act to deter parking and congregation on Hythe Avenue North. Residents should be encouraged not to confront offenders directly, but rather contact the RCMP in order to minimize potential conflicts.

*It is therefore recommended that the intensity of bulbs within the existing street lights on the east side of Hythe Avenue North be increased to project light to the west side of the street in order to help deter evening parking and congregation.*

### **3.3 Issue #3 - Loitering, excessive noise after hours and littering**

The congregation of youth on weekend evenings has raised concerns regarding loitering, excessive noise, rowdiness and littering. To date, significant park infrastructure has been

installed including benches, light standards, stairways and garbage receptacles to enhance the park area.

An option to discourage inappropriate evening use includes encouraging low natural growth on the slope west of Hythe Avenue North through trimming and future replanting to improve sight lines in the park. Limiting public spaces to bench areas along Hythe Avenue North through the installation of low growing plants was considered, but it was determined that such planting would most likely be trampled and have to be removed. To date, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission has not been in support of adopting a park closure bylaw. However, in the future this may be an option to be pursued for Capitol Hill Reservoir Park, for example, from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. to further discourage late evening park use.

During the on site CPTED meeting, the park looked well maintained with no visible garbage on site. It has been determined that installing additional "No Littering" signage would not necessarily deter littering, and that if inappropriate uses are reduced, then the excessive garbage will no longer be a serious issue.

*It is therefore recommended that existing natural vegetation be trimmed to improve sight lines within the park area.*

#### 4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

As this report is in response to the concerns of area residents who attended the Public Hearing for Rezoning Reference #04-29c, it is recommended that a copy of this report and its recommendations are to be sent to those residents. Consultation with those residents that attended the Public Hearing and others abutting the park was undertaken on 2004 December 15 to discuss issues regarding the inappropriate use of the park and the recommendations developed by staff and members of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Committee.

There was a general consensus to the actions proposed in this report by the residents that attended the meeting. It has been determined that the best course of action at this time would be the implementation of the recommended interim measures with further monitoring until 2005 August. If interim measures are found not to be successful at that time, then an additional report would be forwarded to Council to determine further options for Capitol Hill Reservoir Park, including infrastructure alterations to the park and its surrounding area.

In the interim period, it is recommended that Rezoning Reference #04-29c be forwarded to Council for Second Reading of the Bylaw on the understanding that Third Reading and Final Reading would not be advanced prior to the completion and assessment of the 2005 August monitoring period.

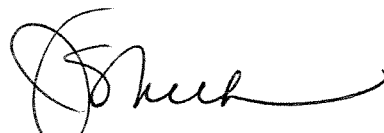
## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Area residents near Capitol Hill Reservoir Park have raised concerns regarding the inappropriate use of the park after hours, and have requested that the City increase enforcement and implement measures to curtail inappropriate uses, or even possibly convert the park area into residential lots. It is recognized that the Capitol Hill Reservoir Park provides an unparalleled public vista of Vancouver and Burrard Inlet. As such, it is recommended that the best course of action would be to proceed with the rezoning of this park to P3 Park and Public Use District, and undertake remedial measures to curtail congregation after hours and conflicts with surrounding residents.

The immediate remedial measures recommended which have been discussed with the adjacent property owners are as follows:

1. Install temporary no post barriers along the west side of Hythe Avenue North to ensure no stopping or parking;
2. Amend existing parking signage on the west side of Hythe Avenue North to no stopping, regardless of time;
3. Install additional "No Exit" signs along Hythe Avenue North to limit unwanted traffic;
4. Install 30 km/h speed zone signage along the edge of the park area;
4. Increase the intensity of street light bulbs along Hythe Avenue North adjacent to the park; and
5. Trim existing natural vegetation to improve sightlines within the park area.

Based on the success of these interim measures, the determination of any needed future, more permanent infrastructure can be made. If the interim remedial measures are not deemed successful following completion of the 2005 August monitoring period, then a future report will be submitted to Council to determine possible further options. It is recommended that Council approve the remedial measures as identified in Section 3.0 of this report and authorize proceeding with Second Reading of Rezoning Reference #04-29c.



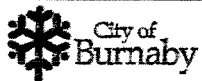
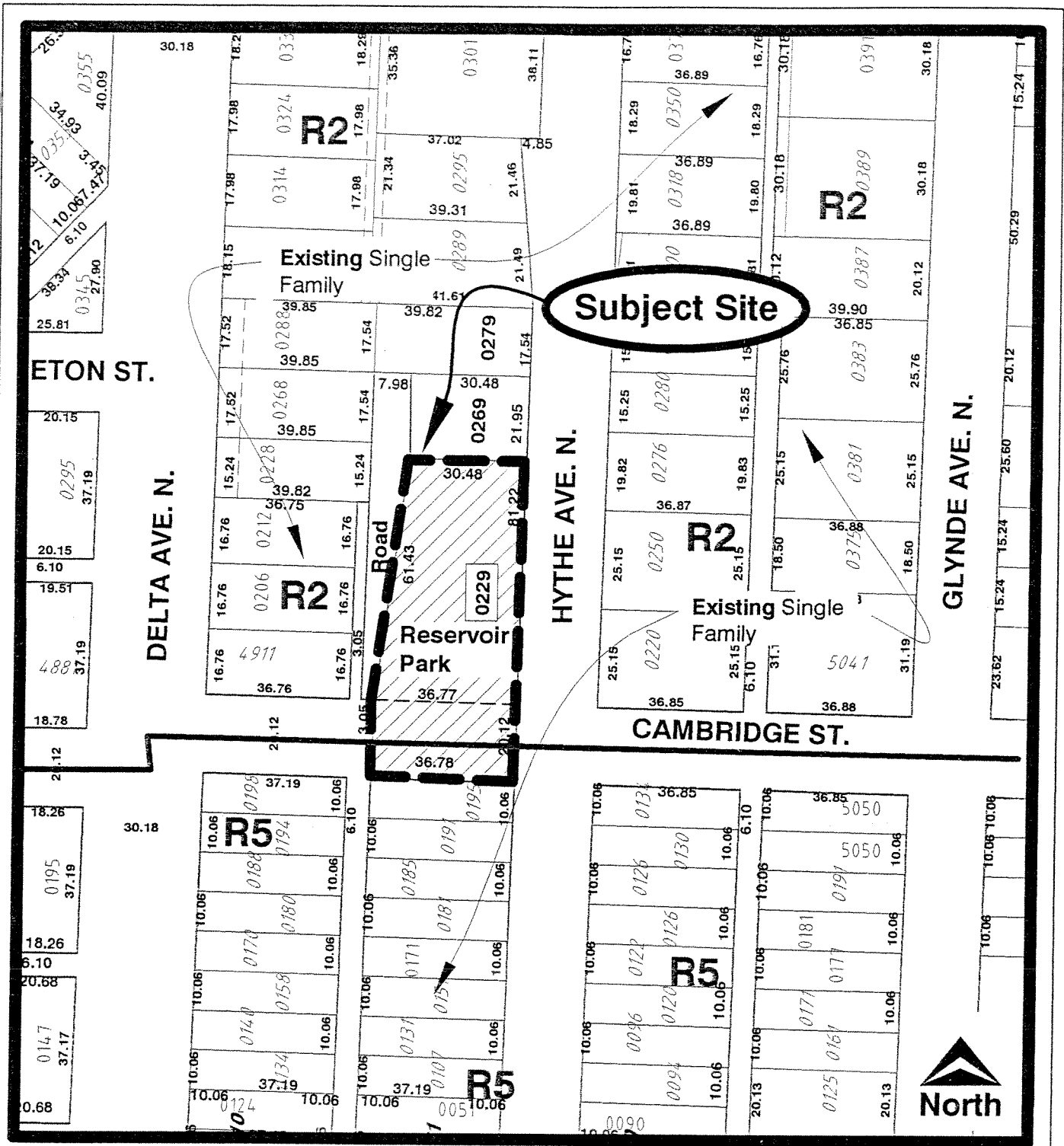
J.S. Belhouse  
Director Planning and Building

JBS:gk

Attachments

cc: Director Engineering  
Assistant Director Engineering, Traffic & Engineering Systems  
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

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**Planning And Building Department**

Scale: 1 = 1500

Drawn By: J.P.C.

Date: July 2004

**REZONING REFERENCE 04 -- 29**  
 0229 Hythe Avenue ( Reservoir Park )

Sketch # 1

