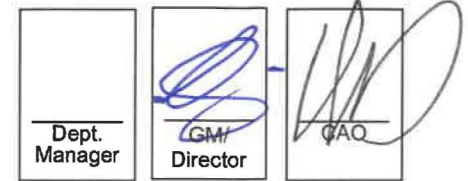


Info Package

Date:



## The District of North Vancouver INFORMATION REPORT TO COUNCIL

October 10, 2023

File: 16.8450.30/034.000

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**SUBJECT:** Spirit Trail Eastern Extension Update

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### REASON FOR REPORT

To provide Council with an update on the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension.

### SUMMARY

In April 2023, Council approved a 5-year Capital Plan which included \$20,000,000 to continue building the Spirit Trail between the Maplewood area and Deep Cove. Approval was granted on condition that 50% of funding would be obtained through grants. Through this approval and the associated budget deliberations, Council provided direction to staff to promptly advance Spirit Trail design and construction. In response, a dedicated project manager was hired to begin to appropriately resource the project, now called the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension.

Work completed to date includes the development of an implementation plan capable of meeting expectations. Several objective-setting workshops have been held and were attended by various District departments as well as Tsleil-Waututh Nation staff. A project charter is under development to capture indicators of success and implementation targets, as well as project risks and opportunities.

Spirit Trail Eastern Extension segments will be implemented over time. Some segments will be constructed soon, while some segments will take longer as they are either technically challenging or require further discussion with neighbourhoods. An awareness campaign will be launched in the following months and will include a public information session where people can raise questions and learn more about the project. There will be further opportunity for input on individual segments as work progresses.

The District's resources will be focused on a route south of Mt Seymour Parkway as it presents the best opportunity to connect more neighbourhoods and destinations. Staff from Tsleil-Waututh Nation staff have also expressed more support for a route south of Mt Seymour Parkway. While work progresses on the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension, safety improvements will be made to the cycling infrastructure along Mt Seymour Parkway. This

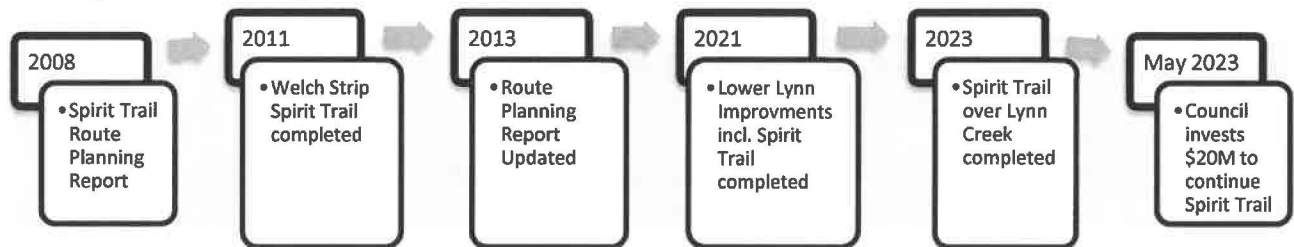
route, with its improved safety features, will provide connections to completed Spirit Trail segments while other segments are designed and constructed.

### **BACKGROUND**

Spirit Trail planning began more than a decade ago. The District first published the Spirit Trail Route Planning report in 2009 and revised it in 2013. This report is being reviewed and updated this year.

The first segment of the Spirit Trail was completed through the Mosquito Creek Marina in the City of North Vancouver in 2009. The first segment of Spirit Trail in the District, the Welch strip in the Norgate neighbourhood, was completed in 2011. More recently, some portions of Spirit Trail were completed as part of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure’s Lower Lynn Improvements project. Last year, the District completed the Spirit Trail over Lynn Creek, including a bridge connecting Bridgman Park and Seylynn Park.

### **Past Spirit Trail Progress:**



### **EXISTING POLICY**

The Spirit Trail Eastern Extension is supported by the Official Community Plan, the OCP Action Plan, Transportation Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, Priority Cycling Routes, Community Energy and Emissions Plan, and the 2023-2027 Financial Plan.

The Spirit Trail Eastern Extension is also a stated priority of the North Shore Connects partnership between the District of West Vancouver, Squamish Nation, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

On March 23, 2009, Council endorsed the Spirit Trail route in principle. The staff report provided for that Council meeting indicated that the alignment south of Mt Seymour parkway was preferred. This reflects staff’s current analysis that suggests focusing resources on the southern alignment provides the most benefit.

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **Route:**

The route being considered to connect Maplewood and Deep Cove is south of Mt Seymour Parkway. Staff will focus resources and time on this route because it provides the highest number of connections to neighbourhoods and key destinations. The southern alignment also more closely meets the original vision for the Spirit Trail by being more accessible, at a

lower elevation, and closer to the water than the alternative concept north of Mt Seymour Parkway.

The 2013 Spirit Trail Route Planning report also includes a route north of Mt Seymour Parkway. The northern route will still be developed and implemented as low-cost opportunities arise. For example, some wayfinding signage between Parkgate and Deep Cove has already been completed.

While the \$20,000,000 investment is currently expected to be able to provide for a continuous Spirit Trail connection from Seymour River to Deep Cove, the trail facility itself may take different forms along its length to reflect the local conditions and also to maintain fiscal responsibility. Some examples include shared streets, on-street paths, and off-street paths.

While the southern alignment provides the greatest opportunity to achieve the project vision and create connections, it is not without challenges and constraints. In some cases, there is only a single viable connection between key places. In other cases, two parallel routes may be required to accommodate all users. The variable nature of alternative routing may lead to variable degrees of opportunities for public input along some route segments.

**Timing:**

Staff started work on the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension in May of this year after the adoption of the 2023-2027 Capital Plan. In June, a dedicated project manager was hired, and another project manager will be added to the team in the next few months to ensure adequate resources are assigned to this work. A considerable amount of work has been completed this year, building the necessary foundation for an ambitious implementation plan.

This implementation plan divides the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension into multiple sub-projects. Each sub-project will deliver a Spirit Trail segment on its own timeline, which can be seen below in **Figure 1**.

The segment between the Seymour River and Berkley Road is expected to reach construction phase first, in late 2024 or early 2025. Topographic surveys, as well as tree, environmental, and archaeological assessments are all underway for this segment. Similar work is also underway for the segment through Cates Park/Whey-ah-Wichen, and a connection from Dollarton Highway to Parkgate through Roche Point Park. Staff are working closely with District Parks and Tsleil-Waututh Nation staff on the Cates Park/Whey-ah-Wichen and Roche Point Trail segments.

This implementation timeline has emerged in response to various factors like technical complexity and anticipated public engagement duration. Some segments with major creek crossings, such as through Windridge Park, are technically complex and will require more time for design. It is anticipated that other segments may need more time for robust public conversations to occur, such as segments near Deep Cove.





Figure 1. Spirit Trail Eastern Extension Project Overview

**Mt Seymour Parkway:**

In support of the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension, improvements to cycling facilities on Mt Seymour Parkway are planned to begin in 2024. This initiative will take advantage of the wide vehicle lanes along Mt Seymour Parkway, providing more separation between motor vehicles and bicycles by narrowing existing motor vehicle travel lanes. This will result in no change to the capacity of Mt Seymour Parkway but will provide considerable improvements in comfort and safety for cyclists. Improved Mt Seymour Parkway cycling facilities will also provide better connectivity to and from Spirit Trail Eastern Extension segments as they are completed over time.

**Concurrence:**

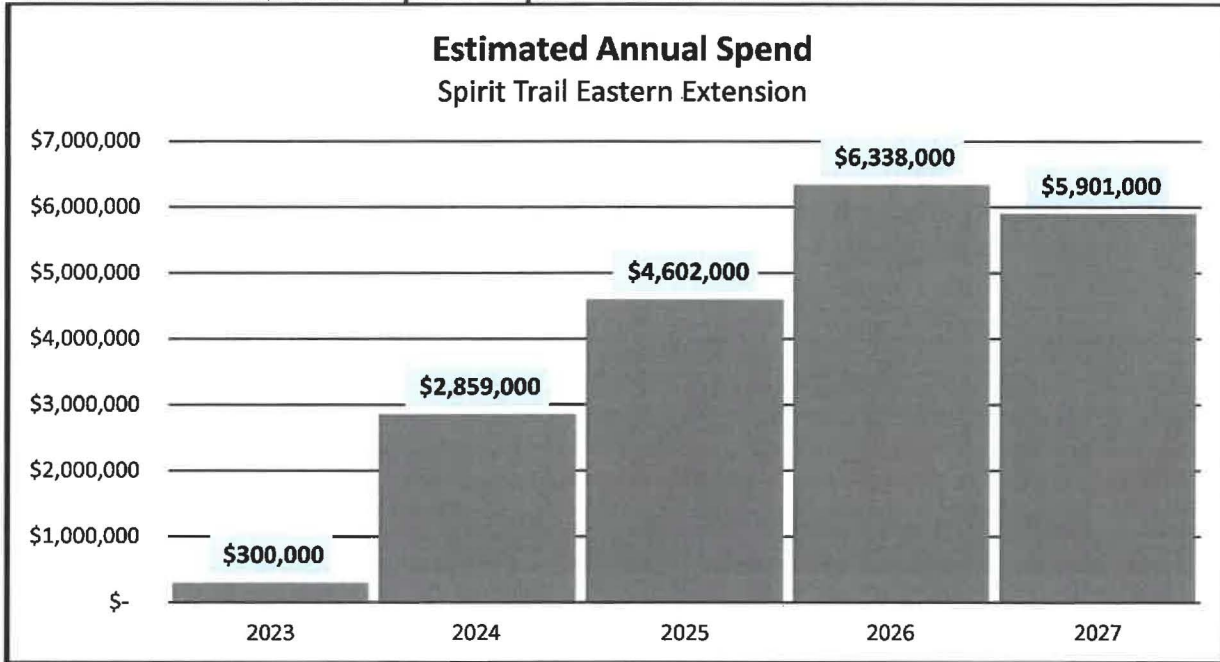
This report has been developed by the Regional Transportation department in collaboration with the Transportation, Integrated Planning, Project Delivery, and Communications departments. In addition, Parks, Engineering Services, and staff from Tsleil-Waututh Nation have been involved in planning and development of the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension project.

**Financial Impacts:**

The approved 5-year Capital Plan allocates \$20,000,000 towards the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension project. The implementation plan discussed earlier in this report proposes the following schedule and cashflow over the five years as shown below in

**Table 1.**

**Table 1. Estimated Annual Spend – Spirit Trail Eastern Extension**



The table illustrates the significant scaling up of investment that is anticipated over the initial three years of the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension. Spreading investment over multiple years is a typical project management approach which provides adequate time for planning and design. In 2023, work has primarily consisted of resourcing, planning, survey, and some early design work. In 2024 and following years, sub-projects will be ready for more substantial investment in design and construction.

Staff are pursuing grant funding opportunities from all sources. At this early stage, many funding opportunities still require additional design work to be completed before submitting an application. However, staff expect many segments to qualify for external funding based on a review of available funding streams and eligibility criteria. For example, it is anticipated that the Mt Seymour Parkway cycling safety improvements will be partially or fully grant-funded by TransLink through its rapid implementation stream.

**Public Input:**

A broad-based communications and engagement plan will raise awareness and inform audiences about plans to extend Spirit Trail east to Deep Cove. A public awareness campaign will be launched in the next few months to remind the public about the vision for the Spirit Trail and the various forms the Spirit Trail can take. There will be opportunities for input for the local neighbourhoods and the broader community, and a public information session is scheduled for this winter.



This overarching plan will use a variety of in-person, online, and print communication tactics, including a public information session, signage, webpage content, printed mailers, social media and video, to ensure that audiences and communities are informed of the District’s plans, scope and timeline to deliver this project.

In addition, separate and individualized engagement and communication strategies will be developed for each segment, which will vary from segment to segment. These plans will range from “Inform” to “Consult” on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Engagement, depending on the availability, or lack, of route options in that segment. For example, in some segments there may be alignment options for community input, but some segments, there will be little or no feasible design alternatives that can be informed by community input. These communications and engagement plans will roll out over time, segment by segment, to inform the design in advance of construction for that segment.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

Adapted and used with permission from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2 Federation).

Inform	Listen & Learn	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
“We will keep you informed. We will provide information that is timely, accurate, balanced, objective, and easily understood. We will respond to questions for clarification and direct you to sources of additional information.”	“We will listen to you and learn about your plans, views, and issues; and work to understand your concerns, expectations, and ideas.”	“We will keep you informed, and listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations in developing final solutions, and we will report back to you on how your input influenced the decision.”	“We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed, and we will report back on how your input influenced the decision.”	“We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions, and we will incorporate your recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.”	“We will implement what you decide.”

**CONCLUSION:**

Through the adoption of the 2023-2027 Financial Plan, Council has made a significant investment towards completing the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension. Resources will be focused on a route to the south of Mt Seymour Parkway to improve connections between key destinations and neighbourhoods. Different segments of the Spirit Trail Eastern Extension will be completed at different times over the subsequent four years. In coordination, safety improvements will be made along Mt Seymour Parkway in 2024 to provide improved active transportation connections to and from completed Spirit Trail segments. Construction is expected to begin late in 2024 on a segment between Seymour River and Burr Place, followed by segments through Cates Park/Whey-ah-Wichen and Roche Point Park.



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REVIEWED WITH:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Clerk's Office
<input type="checkbox"/> Development Planning	_____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications <i>09</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Development Engineering	_____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance <i>AD</i>
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<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bylaw Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Review and Compliance	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Climate and Biodiversity	_____	
External Agencies:		
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		<input type="checkbox"/> NS Health _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> RCMP _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> NVRC _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Museum & Arch. _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____