



February 28, 2018

**TO:** Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
**FROM:** General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Seaside Greenway at Kitsilano Beach Park - Proposed Concept

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## RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the proposed conceptual alignment of a new separated cycling path through Kitsilano Beach Park as described in this report and as illustrated in Appendix C;
- B. THAT the Board support collaboration with the City of Vancouver Engineering Department to coordinate and prepare detailed designs for the path, in particular where the path interfaces with City streets; and
- C. FURTHER THAT staff report back with the detailed design of proposed pedestrian and cycling improvements in Kitsilano Beach Park when public engagement is complete.

## POLICY

As per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over park land use in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within designated parks.

## BACKGROUND

Vancouver has pursued the creation of a public waterfront for over a century, and Park Board and City policies have consistently reflected that ambition. In 1992, the Seaside Cycling Route was approved, and in 1995, the Seaside Greenway. Today, there are continuous separated bike and pedestrian paths along much of the seawall including the extent from the Vancouver Convention Centre to the Burrard Bridge as well as the Point Grey-Cornwall Active Transportation Corridor (PGCATC) between Kitsilano Beach Park and Jericho Park. New separated bike and pedestrian infrastructure has recently been completed along South False Creek including the successful installations of new paths in Charleson Park and Sutcliffe Park. However, there are some gaps in this separated bike infrastructure, most notably the corridor between the Burrard Bridge and Balsam Street on the west extent of Kitsilano Beach Park. Currently, conflicts arise between cyclists and pedestrians in this short stretch of seawall due to an abundance of shared pathways and poor wayfinding cues and signs.

[The City of Vancouver Transportation 2040 Plan](#), adopted in October 2012, identified the seawall paths as an important area of focus to support growth in active transportation modes, and included the concept of developing cycling routes for people of all ages and abilities (AAA). On [July 29, 2013, City Council approved the PGCATC](#), and requested “that the Board of Parks and Recreation proceed with upgrading of the Seaside Greenway in Kitsilano Beach and Hadden Parks as a priority project funded by the City’s capital budget”.

Subsequently, on October 7, 2013, the [Board of Parks and Recreation approved a Board report](#) proposing several cycling and pedestrian alignment and infrastructure improvements within street right-of-ways affecting the following parks:

- Seaforth Park;
- Tatlow Park;
- Volunteer Park;
- Jean Beaty Park;
- Margaret Piggot Park;
- Hastings Mill Park;
- 3-unnamed parks on Point Grey Road at Trafalger St, Stephens St and Trutch St;
- Kitsilano Beach Park; and
- Hadden Park

All of this work has been completed with the exception of improvements at Kitsilano Beach Park and Hadden Park. This scope was excluded after significant community concerns were raised and it became apparent that additional public engagement is needed.

Since 2013, Park Board staff have heard concerns regarding conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians through this corridor. In addition, staff undertook an engagement process in 2016 seeking solutions for the increasingly-used informal path on the west edge of Kitsilano Beach Park near Balsam Street. Senior staff acknowledge the challenges related to path alignments, wayfinding and the variety of transportation modes using this corridor and in November of 2017 asked staff to work with Engineering Services and key stakeholders such as HUB and the Kits Point Residents Association (KPRIA) to develop path alignments and related strategies to minimize conflicts between cycling and pedestrians through Kitsilano Beach Park and to bring a recommended solution to the elected Board for consideration of approval and next steps early in 2018.

This report discusses the relationship between these two modes of transportation at Kitsilano Beach Park and proposes new alignments and infrastructure for bikes and pedestrians - the scope of work does not include Hadden Park or Vanier Park. The proposed improvements are in the spirit of providing safe and comfortable pedestrian and recreational cycling facilities within or along the park while protecting valuable greenspace.

Climate change and sea level rise are factors to be considered in this project along with important Park Board strategies either completed or underway. Within the decade a Kitsilano Beach Park Master Plan should be prepared to incorporate sea level rise protection measures and to provide park improvements related to suggestions outlined in the Park Board's [Biodiversity Strategy](#), VanSplash, VanPlay and the On-water Non-motorized Boating Strategy. Kitsilano Beach Park is a premier destination waterfront park for residents and visitors alike, and the quality of any improvements should reflect the calibre of this remarkable setting and high level of use.

## **DISCUSSION**

Through observation and engagement with the community, staff are aware of the ongoing challenges related to cycling-related conflicts in Kitsilano Beach Park. Including the current

undertaking to address bike and pedestrian challenges, three public engagement processes have been undertaken - in 2013, 2016 and 2017.

### **2013 Engagement**

Stemming from Council's request for Park Board to further improvements planned for the PGCATC, staff elected to build on Engineering's previous public engagement process by focusing engagement for Kitsilano Beach Park pathways on specific and local questions. Staff hosted user intercept surveys to understand how separated pathways might impact people's use of the park, and to enquire about what ideas they might have for greenway upgrades. In total, more than 370 park users provided responses over the course of three (3) high-use days in August and September of 2013. Almost half (45%) said they visited the park daily, indicating a high level of local participation in the survey. Separated pathways for pedestrians and cyclists were overwhelmingly supported. Also, many comments were directed at: providing clear separation between pedestrian and cyclists; protecting pedestrian areas from fast cyclists (especially at the playground and The Boathouse Restaurant); and, ongoing maintenance challenges.

### **2016 Engagement**

Staff met with KPRA on several occasions in 2016 to discuss design options to reduce conflicts at the west edge of Kitsilano Beach Park at the junction with Balsam Street. Options were subsequently presented to the public at an on-site public open house on November 16, 2016. The result of these discussions was a desire for a path alignment that respected the safety and accessibility needs of pedestrians and cyclists while minimizing the impact to green-space within the park. Approximately 100 residents attended the open house, but there were over 2000 responses to the online survey. The majority of respondents preferred to formalize the general alignment of the diagonal path currently connecting the east/west shared pathway to Balsam Street. Other feedback included a desire to make the new path shared and not "bike only"; to look at the path alignments through the whole park and not just this corner; and, to add to and improve signage.

### **2017 Engagement**

Park Board and Engineering staff met with local community group representatives including KPRA, tennis, basketball, and volleyball, HUB, and the Boathouse Restaurant on three occasions in late 2017 to discuss the current seaside bike path alignment and its challenges. Staff met with each group once and subsequently met with both groups simultaneously to provide an opportunity for dialogue and to discuss the merits of various conceptual pathway alignments. Both groups were in agreement in their desire to reduce conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians and motor-vehicles with an emphasis on safety, but have strong differences of opinion about the Arbutus Street corridor and south parking lot sections in particular. The General Manager of the Boathouse Restaurant did send a letter supporting no net loss of parking and a bike path alignment that avoids conflicting with the entrances and service access to the restaurant. A map that indicates the various pathway alignment options discussed during these meetings is attached as Appendix A.

### **Staff Recommended Alignment**

Based on the design challenges and potential areas of conflict through the corridor, the proposed alignment aims to achieve the following park planning principles.

- Minimize impacts on greenspace;

- Create a safe environment for pedestrians, cyclists and other modes of transportation with accommodation for all ages and abilities;
- Maintain contiguous open spaces, destinations, pedestrian gathering areas, and open park areas;
- Consider the intensity of use of greenspaces in all parts of this park, now and for the future;
- Prioritize routes that take cyclists “to” and not “through” key destinations and gathering spaces. A majority of the greenspace in Kitsilano Park is considered by staff to be a destination for locals and visitors alike;
- Improve pedestrian connections along Cornwall Street and into the park;
- Re-imagine the park entry at Yew Street;
- Enhance opportunities for bike parking adjacent to the bikeway and allow walking access from these points to key destinations;
- Employ the results of further studies to explore opportunities for bikes to access the beach and Boathouse via the service entrance off of Arbutus Street corridor and south;
- Create separate paths for bikes and pedestrians;
- Maintain a “park-like” user experience and visual connections to the water for bikes;
- Minimize the loss of parking within and adjacent to the park and replace parking where feasible;
- Reconfigure southern parking lot and reduce the number of entrances;
- Provide clear linkages to existing seaside greenway bike routes;
- Replace trees that are unsafe or in poor health and enhance the urban forest within the park; and
- Connect seamlessly to Balsam Street and Ogden Avenue at the west and east extents of the park respectively.

The path alignments through the park have two zones in which several alignment options were explored and discussed. These are highlighted as “Area 1” and “Area 2” on the graphic titled “*Kitsilano Beach Park Bike Path - Options Discussed*” (see Appendix A). Within each inset, there are three options identified that achieve the intent of moving bikes through the park, however they each have different merits. In order to effectively select a recommended alignment, staff developed a *Design Decision Matrix* (see Appendix B) that identified specific characteristics on which to rank options. The matrix critically examined each option and the outcome suggested that Option 3 is the preferred route around the southern parking lot and Option 5 is the preferred route through the greenspace at the north end of the park.

The recommended alignment can be seen in Appendix C: *Kitsilano Beach Park Bike Path - Staff Recommended Alignment*.

### **Summary of Design Challenges and Proposed Solutions**

The following section describes areas of concern on existing pathways moving through the park from west to east and proposes strategies to overcome issues. Staff have considered the public engagement to date, park planning principles, and the intensity of park use by pedestrians in making these recommendations. Additionally, key principles and consideration of advantages and disadvantages of various path location options were analyzed. A map that illustrates the conceptual pathway alignment recommended by staff is attached as Appendix C and the analysis is described below.

### **Balsam Street Connection**

The connection of the Point Grey bike route to Kitsilano Beach Park at the Balsam Street/Cornwall Avenue intersection, at the west end of the park, presents challenges as pedestrians, bikes and vehicles interface at the northeast corner of the intersection. Presently the primary east/west corridor through the park along Cornwall is designated as a shared path for bikes and pedestrians resulting in high concentrations of people at the Balsam/Cornwall intersection and conflicts between multi-modal path users of all ages and abilities.

Through the 2016 public engagement process, it was evident that the majority of respondents supported formalizing the diagonal path that has been worn in the grass at the west edge of the park. Formalizing this path as a shared and separated route allows a connection to the Point Grey bike route that avoids potential conflicts with pedestrians and vehicles at the main intersection. Formalizing this route also allows for a more accessible path as it follows the contour lines and avoids climbing a steeper section of Balsam Street.

Collaborative design work with Engineering is necessary to create a safe transition between the west edge of the park and Balsam Street.

### **Shared Path on Cornwall between Balsam Street and Yew Street**

Firstly, the existing path is 3.2m wide, appropriate for a two-way bike lane, but not a shared path. Secondly, there is chain-link fence along the entire south edge of the path separating the path from the planted boulevard, street and parked vehicles. The fence creates a safety concern as people parking vehicles are forced to walk east or west along a narrow curbside area adjacent to the street before they can enter the park.

Staff recommends that it is advisable to build a new sidewalk, preferably along the back of the curb on Cornwall so patrons of the park can safely move east to west. This would allow for the currently shared path to be converted to bike-only and would further reduce conflicts between the various active transportation modes between Balsam and Yew Streets. Detailed design needs to be explored as well as a tree strategy that minimizes impacts to existing trees. There are overgrown shrubs and invasive tree species in this location which would be removed. As this sidewalk would likely be on street dedication, staff will work with City staff to design and construct it.

### **Yew Street - East/West Crossing**

The north side of the Yew Street intersection within the park is one of the busiest nodes and is a key entry into the park from the Kitsilano neighbourhood and a primary pedestrian access

to the beach and pool. There is also a bus stop at this location contributing further to the traffic issues. Pedestrians in this area need to be mindful of east/west bike traffic and of the potential for conflicts. Thick vegetation including dense shrubs and ornamental trees are currently encroaching onto paths and growing to a height that is inhibiting clear sight-lines between the different transportation modes. Additionally, the alignment of the bike corridor is close to the intersection and doesn't provide an arrival zone to the park for patrons arriving from the south.

Shifting the alignment of the bike path slightly north as it approaches the Yew Street crossing will allow for a safer transition zone for pedestrians and improve visibility for cyclists approaching the node. Additionally, planting beds in this zone can be reimagined and some removals and replacements may be required in addition to increased seasonal pruning. Collaborative design work with Engineering is necessary to create safe active transportation interventions that examine traffic volumes and possibilities for further safety measures including grade changes, tactile warnings, paint markings and signage and the formalizing of this location as a celebratory primary pedestrian entry.

### **South Parking Lot**

The south parking lot has approximately 275 spots, some of which are occupied by a Mobi bike-share station. This is the primary parking lot for the park, a key arrival to the destinations and a revenue generator for the Park Board. The parking lot currently has three 2-way access points for vehicles from Arbutus Street. The current bike path alignment directs cyclists north from the Yew intersection towards the beach and then eastward through the northern portion of the parking lot. Through this alignment, bikes are directed into a high concentration of pedestrians near the beach and tennis courts and cross paths with pedestrians arriving to the park from the parking lot area. As cyclists navigate through the parking lot they are faced with oncoming vehicles arriving to the park. Local community groups have expressed a desire to maintain the maximum amount of parking within the park and a need to improve separation between bikes and pedestrians in the name of safety, the current bike path alignment is not preferable.

Staff recommends that the alignment of the bike path east of Yew Street be located in the greenspace between the parking lot and sidewalk on the north side of Cornwall Street. The experience along the path could be enhanced through strategic plantings and lighting. In addition, the path would curve to the north at the southeast corner of the park and connect to a path alignment adjacent to Arbutus Street. The number of vehicular access points to the parking lot from Arbutus should be reduced to minimize the number of conflict points between people cycling and driving. The driveways will need to be redesigned to make them as safe as possible. Finally, a new bike parking area should be placed proximate to the Yew Street entrance to the park as it is a key arrival area and the Mobi station within the parking lot could be shifted closer to the new bike path alignment.

### **Restaurant and Lifeguard Station**

The public realm west and adjacent to the lifeguard station and the Boathouse Restaurant is a high traffic zone at the beach. Thousands of users pass through the area during the busiest days of the summer, including many tourists.

### **Restaurant and Service Entrance**

The service laneway east of the restaurant accommodates deliveries as well as parking for restaurant staff and Park Board lifeguards. KPRA have explicitly asked that the integrity of

this zone be respected and that no bike lanes pass through this area whereas HUB recognizes that this may be a key connection opportunity for bikes accessing the beach from the Arbutus Street stretch of bike route.

Staff respects these positions and suggests that a detailed study be conducted in this area to further understand the use and traffic patterns in particular once a new separated path is established. With further study, an informed design approach can be developed to explore beach access opportunities and additional bike parking areas that may be accessed from the Arbutus portion of bike lane.

#### **Pump-station and EV-Charging Stations East of Tennis Courts**

The pump-station located east of the tennis courts is sited very close to the street and sidewalk. Additionally, there are EV-charging stations at this location to serve increasing demand for electric vehicles. Navigating a bike lane through this stretch will require thoughtful design in order to maintain a suitable width for both bikes and a pedestrian sidewalk. EV-charging terminals will be maintained, but the locations may shift if determined through the detailed design process. It is likely that some parking spaces will be lost on Arbutus Street to accommodate paths and access to the pump station, but also possible that parking spaces may be added to the south if the entrances to the south parking lot are reconfigured.

#### **Playground Connection at Creelman**

Another key access point to Kitsilano Beach Park is the entrance at the intersection of Arbutus Street and Creelman Avenue. Not only is there a desire line from this intersection directly to the beach, but also the playground destination. A detailed examination of access to this amenity will need to be pursued in the next phase of work.

#### **Arbutus Street (North of Creelman Avenue)**

The parking along Arbutus Street north of Creelman Avenue is valued by residents and park patrons and allows coveted access to the beach, playground and basketball courts. Parking is allowed anytime on the west side of Arbutus except between midnight and 6am.

The recommendation is to have a bike lane on the west side of the street, either on a modified street right-of-way or within the park. Some trees in the park along this corridor have been removed recently and others may need to be removed soon due to structural decay. Therefore, opportunities exist to accommodate a bike lane along the eastern edge of the park. Additionally, Engineering staff will explore reconfiguration of the street in order to provide more space for walking and cycling within street right-of-way. Further study is required through this corridor to determine the best approach to safely move bikes in a north/south direction while continuing to accommodate motor vehicle and parking needs.

#### **McNicoll Avenue Parking Lot Entrance**

Bikes moving north/south along Arbutus Street and attempting to traverse the entrance to the northern parking lot at McNicoll Avenue face the potential of conflict with motor vehicles.

Opportunities should be explored to revise the entrance to this parking lot, including grade separations, tactile surfaces, line painting and signage. The entrance area also could be considered as a better location for the Mobi station existing on Arbutus or as another bike parking area.

### **North Picnic Area**

The north end of Kitsilano Beach Park bounded by McNicoll Ave on the south and Maple Street to the east is a valued picnic area and open space with a robust urban forest cluster. The eastern portion of this open space is the least used area as it is farthest from the waterfront walking paths, benches and picnic tables. Respecting the integrity of the picnic portion of this space and the unobstructed connectivity to the beach is an important consideration. However, staff appreciates the importance of creating a park-like cycling experience for users of the bike path.

Therefore, rather than relegating bikes to Maple Street and a steep block of McNicoll Avenue, staff recommend creating a meandering path through the eastern portion of the green space to connect the Arbutus Street segment with Ogden Avenue. The connection to Ogden Avenue is an important consideration and the path should align with Ogden in order to create a seamless transition into and out of Kitsilano Beach Park. Eastbound bike traffic would then navigate along Ogden Avenue while avoiding Hadden Park.

### **Strategic Alignment**

This project aligns with the Park Board's Strategic Framework in the goals of engaging people and parks and recreation for all. Staff have been working openly with the community groups to understand and achieve goals and strengthen relationships and this will be ongoing throughout the detailed design stage of the project if approved. Building new cycling pathways will be a great way to expand.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Should the Board elect to approve the proposed conceptual cycle path alignment, staff will proceed with the next steps for the project. This includes collaborating with the Engineering Department and developing detailed design options for the pathway, especially on city streets. Staff will also collaborate with other City departments to incorporate interim sea level rise protection measures in the pathway design if appropriate. These detailed designs will be presented in a public engagement process. The timeline for this is dependent upon the availability of other department resources but ideally will occur in the summer months of 2018 when the park is busiest, positioning the project to receive funding for construction within the 2019 to 2022 Capital Plan, subject to Council and Board approvals of the funding.

### **SUMMARY**

Throughout Kitsilano Beach Park there are ongoing conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians, motor vehicles and other modes of active transportation. Efforts to separate these modes have been successful elsewhere in the City of Vancouver and similar strategies should be adopted in Kitsilano Beach Park to improve safety and the user experience throughout the park corridor. Adopting the staff recommended path alignment and specific design interventions within Kitsilano Beach Park will improve the connectivity between sections of the seawall to the east and west and resolve ongoing wayfinding and circulation challenges.

This project aligns with Park Board strategic goals of engaging with people and providing access to greenspace for all. Staff have considered the public engagement to date and are proposing a safe and scenic cycling path through Kitsilano Beach Park that is founded on the principles of access for all ages and abilities, priority pedestrian access to the beach and its promenades, parking retention, and protection of the urban forest canopy in this premier

waterfront destination park. Approval of the conceptual alignment will result in further work in which staff will prepare detailed designs and engage with the public prior to reporting back to the Board for approval of the new seaside greenway in Kitsilano Beach Park.

Successful implementation of this initiative will require Park Board and Engineering staff to work collaboratively to technically evolve the designs to be functional and safe. Additionally, the community will need to be engaged in a meaningful way to glean insights and enrich the designs for this portion of the Seaside Greenway.

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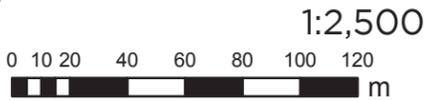
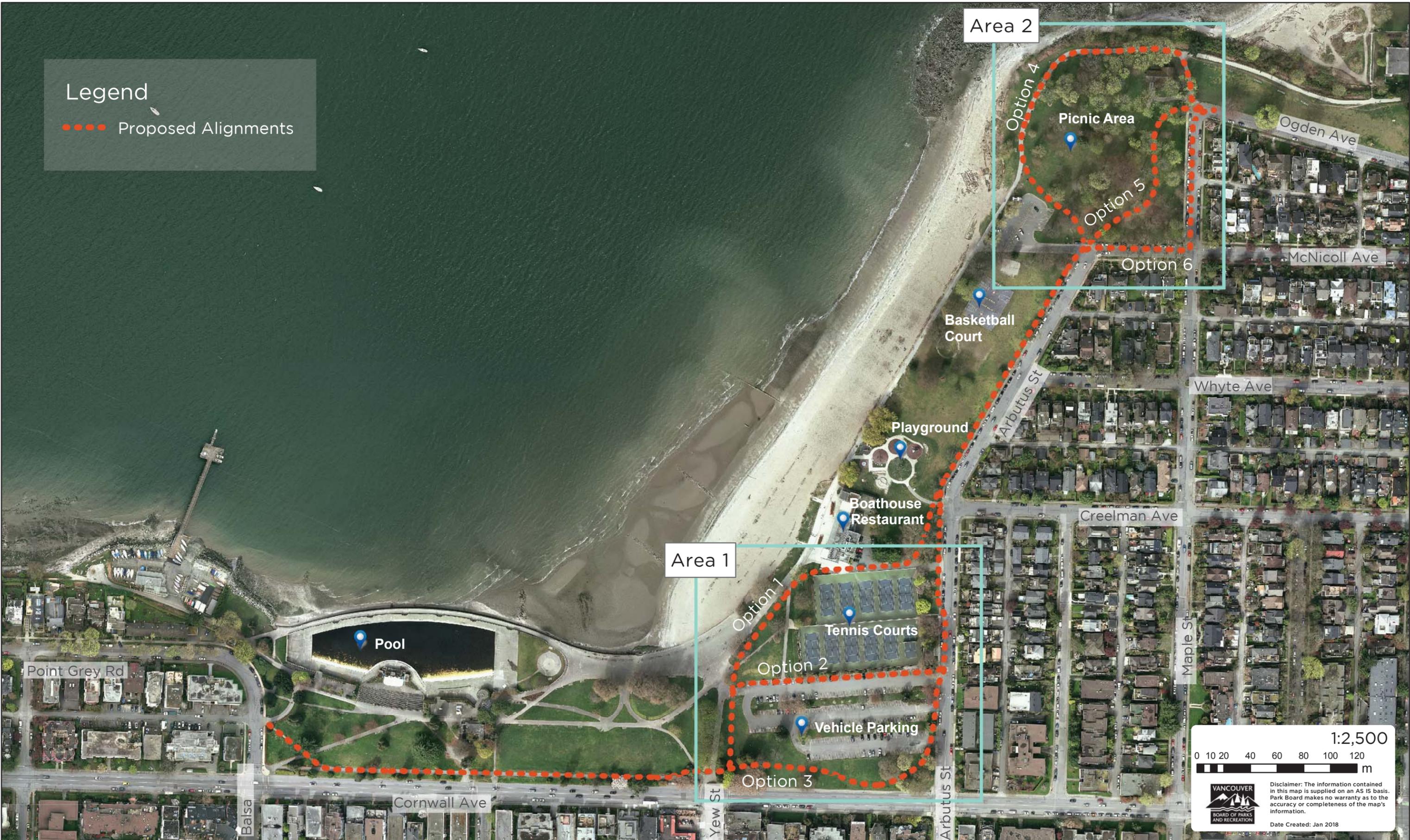
# Kitsilano Beach Park Bike Path - Options Discussed

## APPENDIX A



**Legend**

●●●● Proposed Alignments



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Date Created: Jan 2018

# Seaside Greenway: Kitsilano Beach Park Design Decision Matrix

January 29, 2018

## APPENDIX B



	Area 1: Southern Parking Lot			Area 2: Northern Greenspace		
	Option - 1	Option - 2	Option - 3	Option - 4	Option - 5	Option - 6
<b>Pedestrian Conflict Potential</b>	High	High	Low	High	Low	Low
<b>Vehicle Conflict Potential</b>	Medium	High	Low	Low	Low	High
<b>Loss of Greenspace</b>	702m <sup>2</sup>	240m <sup>2</sup>	501m <sup>2</sup>	744m <sup>2</sup>	429m <sup>2</sup>	0
<b>Park-like User Experience</b>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Intuitive Wayfinding</b>	Less	Less	More	Less	More	Less
<b>Distance to Beach</b>	20m	50m	85m	25m	65m	65m
<b># of Parking Spots Lost</b>	0	50	10	0	0	0
<b>Impact to Boathouse Service Entrance</b>	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Cost</b>	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low

### \* ASSUMPTIONS:

- Safety issues are typically weighted more than less critical considerations such as User-Experience
- Pedestrian conflict refers to areas where bikes cross paths with pedestrians or interface frequently with pedestrians or takes bikes into pedestrian protected zones
- Vehicle conflicts areas include the service entry behind the boathouse, the southern parking lot area and entrances, the entrance to the northern parking lot and Creelman
- 275 parking spots in south parking lot - some loss to accommodate recommended path alignment. Northern parking lot not affected.
- The area of greenspace lost assumes a 3.0m width bike path
- A park-like user experience is desirable and interfacing with vehicles is assumed to impact the experience
- Intuitive wayfinding improves the likelihood of bike paths being used - right-angle turns, especially in high-traffic areas can make navigating paths difficult
- The distance to beach is a key consideration - the distance for Option #3; #5 and #6 is assumed to be from a newly created bike parking lay-by (location TBD)
- The Boathouse service entrance has been identified as an area of potential conflict and is reflected in this matrix
- Costs are general and based on magnitude of work relative to other options. Option #2 would require redesign of southern parking lot - additional analysis needed

### \* ROUTE OPTIONS:

- **Option-1:** From Yew Street northward on west side of the tennis courts, eastward along Boathouse service entrance and northeast through the trees to path along Arbutus
- **Option-2:** From Yew Street northward and then turning eastward along the northern portion of the south parking lot and connecting to path along Arbutus
- **Option-3:** From Yew Street eastward through greenspace between the south parking and Cornwall turning north through trees and across parking entrances from Arbutus
- **Option-4:** From path along Arbutus turning northwest from McNicoll above north parking lot and parallel to pedestrian path, eastward and returning to Ogden
- **Option-5:** From path along Arbutus turning northeast after crossing McNicoll and meandering through the park trees east of the picnic area and connecting to Ogden
- **Option-6:** From path along Arbutus turning east along McNicoll and then turning north along Maple and connecting to Ogden



**Legend**

- Recommended Alignment
- Special Study Area

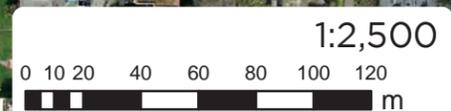
Connect to on-street route

Reduce to single parking lot entrance

Reconfigured intersection at Yew St

Completely separated bike/pedestrian paths

Connect to on-street route



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