



June 27, 2022

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Low Intensity Turf Maintenance (Meadow) Project – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the [Low Intensity Turf Maintenance \(Meadow\)](#) project. As per the [Board direction](#) provided in November 2021, staff were asked to report back on the “full extent of low-use turf on park managed lands that may be considered for transition to natural management”, as well as on the work with Engineering Services to establish a plan to also transition suitable medians to natural management.

Meadow Project – 2022 Implementation

Implementation of the meadow project has been an ongoing process of identifying and converting suitable low-use turf areas to naturalized meadows, with adjustments made continually in response to valuable feedback from maintenance crews and the public. Between 2021 and 2022, 80 additional meadow sites were added, increasing the current total meadow area by over four hectares (see Table 1 below). All parks from the 2021 pilot continue to have meadow sites in 2022, with some difficult to maintain areas removed and others tailored based on public feedback. Additionally, challenges sourcing equipment capable of mowing and collecting long vegetation placed increased strain on Park Operations staff and so some meadow areas have been temporarily reduced until this is rectified.

Table 1: 2021-2022 Meadow Sites

ITEM	2021	2022
Park Meadows	17	22
Street Meadows (blocks)	10	85
Golf Course Meadows	03	03
Total Sites (count)	30	110
Total Area (hectares)	37ha	41.43
Naturalized* Meadow	13	89
Enhanced** Meadow	17	21

*Naturalized: no improvements, other than reduced mowing
 **Enhanced: wildflower seed, plugs or bulbs are incorporated

As noted in the above table, 75 blocks of street meadows were added in 2022. Expanding the naturalized meadow project to several citywide street medians and boulevards was done through collaboration with City of Vancouver Engineering staff. Recognizing that these areas may present potential sightline interference and enhanced fire risk from dry vegetation along roadways, mown



perimeters will be maintained around these meadows to provide a clear buffer zone. Park Operations staff will monitor closely and adjust as necessary.

Next Steps

Appropriate equipment is being sourced to enable crews to more efficiently manage the maintenance of long vegetation in meadow areas. Expansion of naturalized meadow areas will continue through 2022, and staff are working diligently to find an acceptable balance between maintained and naturalized turf grass throughout the parks system. All opportunities are being explored and staff expect to report back later this year with revised annual meadow targets for the Board's consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)
General Manager - Parks and Recreation

/ag/jt/clc

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
PB Project Team
PB Communications