



**Council Member Motion**  
**For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of July 8 2021**

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 30 2021  
**From:** Mayor Helps, Councillor Alto and Councillor Isitt  
**Subject:** Funding for the protection of the Kings Road Community Nature Green Space

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**BACKGROUND**

The District of Saanich has requested funding from the City of Victoria and the District of Oak Bay to help protect the Kings Road Community Nature Green Space. Saanich acquired the lands from BC Hydro in 2019 for \$5.5 million. This was enabled through payment of \$1,475,920 from the Land Sale Reserve Fund and \$4,040,400 in temporary borrowing. To avoid selling off portions of the 2.2 hectares for development to recover some of the cost, a fundraising initiative is underway to seek contributions to recover \$2.7M, or 50 per cent.

The Kings Road Community Nature Green Space is located close to our shared municipal borders deep in the “panhandle region” of Saanich next to the Royal Jubilee Hospital. The green space provides an important sub-regional local park for residents in Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay. When its future is secured, the community is committed to restoring the nature space and the riparian areas along Bowker Creek by planting additional trees and native and climate-resistant species creating a thriving urban natural space forest and watercourse.

This acquisition aligns with proclamations of the 2021-2030 UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, our need to avoid “paving over nature”, and the utilization of nature-based solutions to climate change. Protecting the full 2.2 hectare green space will help Oak Bay, Saanich, and Victoria to meet our climate goals.

The acquisition also supports implementation of the 2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint endorsed by Oak Bay, Victoria, and Saanich. As envisioned in the Bowker Creek 100 Year Blueprint, the Kings Road Community Nature Green Space is the cornerstone for restoration of a half a kilometer of the Reach 7 Bowker Creek greenway from Richmond Road to Trent Street. Providing a major step towards restoration of the entire Bowker Creek watercourse, it will build on the restoration undertaken by the Oak Bay and give momentum to Victoria’s greenway corridor for Reaches 8 and 9. Reach 7 is the fulcrum for the future greenway connecting Oak Bay, Victoria, and Saanich. Achieving the collective vision for the “Bowker Creek Greenway” will bring direct access for the residents of Oak Bay and Victoria to the regional trails and greenway systems a significant step closer to realization (See Map 2 in attached letter from Saanich).

The District of Saanich has requested a contribution from the City of Victoria of between \$250,000

and \$400,000 and a contribution from the District of Oak Bay of between \$60,000-\$90,000. Staff have recommended that an appropriate funding source for the City's contribution is the 2021 contingency budget.

At this point the City's 2021 contingency budget sits at somewhere between \$423,000 and \$658,000 remaining. Two items which have been provisionally allocated from the contingency budget are Tiny Homes \$110,000, and Additional Policing Support May – September \$125,000 can be funded through the UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services Program Grant, should the City be successful in that grant process. Given that we are just past halfway through the year and given that there are a number of unknowns even with the existing contingency budget allocations, we are recommending, subject to a number of conditions, that the City support the Kings Road Community Nature Green Space preservation effort with a donation of \$250,000.

This initiative has important regional benefits to the communities in the Bowker Creek watershed with regard to climate response, sustaining biodiversity, access to nature, improved hydrological function, active transportation, enjoyment, health, and wellbeing. It is recommended that, subject to a number of conditions, the City support the preservation effort with a donation of \$250,000.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the City provide a donation of \$250,000 to Saanich for the preservation of the King's Road Community Nature Sanctuary subject to:

1. The District of Oak Bay making a contribution of at least \$60,000.
2. The total fundraising goal being met, ensuring preservation of the entire 2.2 hectare parcel.
3. A plaque or other appropriate measure recognizing the City's contribution on behalf of it's residents.
4. Registering a covenant on title to ensure that the parcel remains green space in perpetuity.
5. An agreement, that would require repayment of the grant (adjusted for inflation) if the land is used for a purpose other than publicly accessible community green space.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Mayor Helps

   
Councillor Alto      Councillor Isitt