



The Corporation of the District of Saanich | Mayor's Office

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Via email: mayor@oakbay.ca

June 7, 2021

Mayor and Council
District of Oak Bay Municipal Hall
2167 Oak Bay Avenue
Victoria, BC V8R 1G2

Dear Mayor Murdoch and District of Oak Bay Council:

Re: Request to contribute funding for the protection of the Kings Road Community Nature Green Space

I hope you are all very well as we head into the summer months.

On April 26, 2021, Saanich Council considered a [report from the Mayor's Standing Committee for Fundraising for the Kings Road Community Nature Green Space \(KCNGS\)](#) that recommended as follows:

- To contribute \$1.7M from the sale of the Willis Point Property (PID: 009-825-220, Section 127, Lake District Part E ½ of W ½) towards the protection of KCNGS;
- to request funds from Oak Bay and Victoria given the sub-regional nature and connectivity of the space, towards the protecting of KCNGS; and
- to extend the fundraising period by one year to March 2022.

Council resolved to postpone discussion on the contribution of \$1.7M from the sale of the Willis Point Property until replies are received from the District of Oak Bay and the City of Victoria, and to extend the fundraising period. A copy of the Mayor's Standing Committee's report is attached. The minutes of the April 26 Council meeting are available on our [website](#).

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.

I write to ask for your kind consideration to assist funding the capital costs to secure protection of 100 per cent of this neighborhood natural green space. We understand the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic place difficult fiscal impacts on municipalities. We are hopeful of a contribution in the range of \$60,000 – \$90,000 from Oak Bay and some \$250,000 – \$400,000 from Victoria.

Together with the potential of \$1.7M from the sale at Willis Point these sums move us closer to the goal of \$2.75M. Community fundraising reached \$36,000 before being completely stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Located close to our shared municipal borders deep in the “panhandle region” of Saanich next to the Royal Jubilee Hospital, this green space provides an important sub-regional local park for residents in our three municipalities (Map 1). When its future is secured the community is committed to restoring KCNGS and the riparian areas along the creek with the planting of additional trees and native and climate-resistant species creating a thriving urban natural space forest and watercourse.

The recent experience with the COVID-19 pandemic reinforces our conviction that urban green spaces provide significant benefits to the mental health and physical wellbeing of our community. The close proximity of KCNGS to Royal Jubilee Hospital and the cancer clinic provides patients, their families, and hospital staff with opportunities to experience the recuperative and healing benefits of this natural green space.

This acquisition aligns with proclamations of the 2021-2030 UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, our need to avoid “paving over nature” in 2021, the utilization of nature-based solutions to climate change, and the 2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint endorsed by Oak Bay, Victoria, and Saanich.

As envisioned in the [Bowker Creek 100 Year Blueprint](#), the KCNGS 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 (Map 2).

The multi-generational, youth-led interest in protecting KCNGS was demonstrated over two decades ago by the initiative of Oak Bay student Maia Green (Fig. 1). Protecting the full area will help Oak Bay, Victoria, and Saanich meet our climate goals.

In summary, 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.

We would appreciate an opportunity to present at a Committee of the Whole or Council meeting to share more information with you and to obtain an understanding of the next steps in fundraising to secure in perpetuity this natural green space for our three municipalities.

Sincerely,

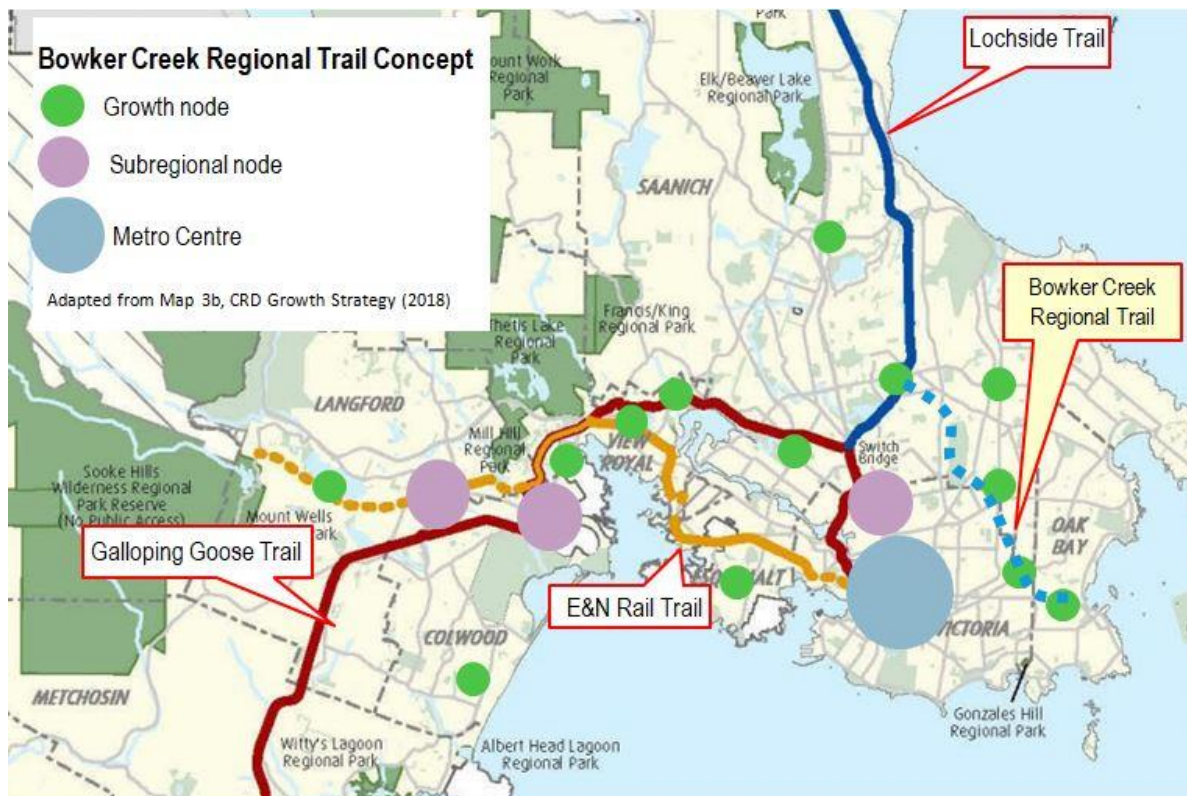


Fred Haynes
Mayor
Attachment

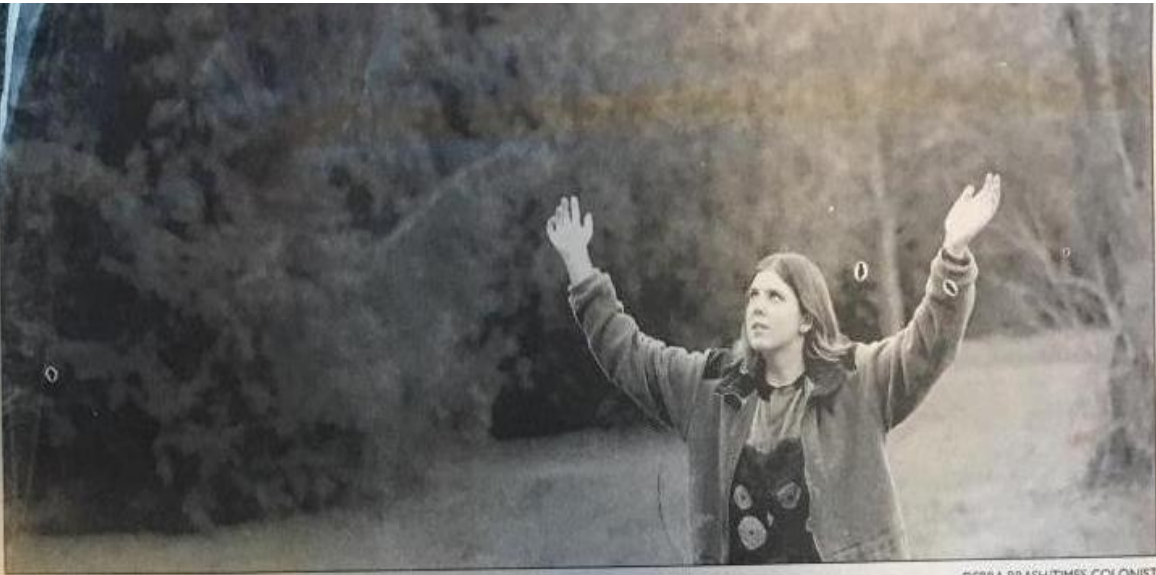
cc: Saanich Council
City of Victoria Mayor and Council
Mayor's Standing Committee on Fundraising for KCNGS
Friends of Bowker Creek



Map 1. Proximity of the KCNGS to Victoria and Oak Bay and Jubilee Hospital



Map 2. Connection through the Bowker Creek Greenway to access Regional Trails



DEBRA BRASH/TIMES COLONIST

Oak Bay High student Maia Green wants to preserve park between Haultain Street and Kings Road.

▼ ROYAL JUBILEE HOSPITAL

Student fights parking lot

By Louise Dickson
Times Colonist staff

Oak Bay high school student Maia Green is trying to save a neighbourhood park from being plowed into a temporary parking lot for employees at Royal Jubilee Hospital.

Green, a Grade 11 student and a representative of the school's environmental club, is circulating a petition protesting the proposed conversion of the 2.2 hectare park between Kings Road and Haultain Street into more than 400 parking spaces.

"I'm upset the politicians decided to choose the easiest way to deal with the problem," Green said Sunday. "I think they should have been more creative to benefit more people."

So far Green and several friends have collected about 600 signatures. She is hoping to encourage Victoria-Hillside MLA Steve Orcherton to find other ways of finding parking for about 500 cars which will be needed when construction begins on the new Vancouver Island Cancer clinic at RJH in April.

In December, local politicians said construction of the clinic could start if con-

struction of an \$8-million parkade was put on hold, and if a temporary solution to the parking problems at the hospital could be found.

One of the key options being looked at by the B.C. Building Corp., which has overall authority to fast-track the clinic, is converting the park — on land owned by B.C. Hydro — into temporary parking spots.

Since the announcement, Orcherton has attended two meetings with community associations. A final meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Begbie Hall.

Orcherton said he will examine every option at the Wednesday meeting.

"But tied to each option is the number of parking spots that could be provided and the cost associated with it."

The MLA said he is considering creating additional parking spots at Royal Jubilee Hospital. He is also studying park-and-ride and park-and-carpool proposals.

In the past week, Orcherton has canvassed people in the neighbourhood to see if anyone has a parking spot in their driveway that could be used by hospital staff.

"I've talked to a hundred people and they're clear they don't want us to use the

Hydro land. But I have to be clear as well. I don't want to see another delay in the building of the cancer clinic," said Orcherton.

"The priority is health care, but the stumbling block for the past eight years has also been temporary parking. It's crazy. We have to move forward."

Orcherton said he will make his recommendations on how to solve the parking in the first week of February.

"It may be a combination of options. I'll try to decide what's the least irritant to the people in the community. But I don't think I'll be able to please everybody."

Meanwhile, Green is canvassing local churches to see how many spaces they might have available for hospital staff parking on weekdays. She also believes more hospital staff should make use of the transit system.

"The first time I saw the park, I thought it was a totally magical place. I had no idea it was there," said Green. "It's just so beautiful. It has a meadow, a mini-forest and a creek right next to it. You can walk under an archway of trees on the path next to the creek."

Figure 1. Maia Green, Oak Bay student campaigns to preserve the Kings Road Green Space