

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: 2006 June 07

FROM: DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 31000-40
Reference: Still Creek

**SUBJECT: STILL CREEK WATERSHED INTEGRATED STORMWATER
MANAGEMENT PLAN (ISMP)**

PURPOSE: To present the draft report for the Still Creek ISMP and to seek Council and Committee approval in principle for the report.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Committee recommend to Council:
 - a. receive the draft Still Creek ISMP (From Pipe Dreams to Healthy Streams) Report;
 - b. approve in principle of the vision, strategies and the recommended plan for the Still Creek watershed; and
 - c. authorize staff to finalize the report and incorporate the recommended action items, where appropriate, in the City's infrastructure and community plan development process; and
 - d. copies of report be sent to City of Vancouver and GVRD

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

In May 2005, the Committee received a preliminary report for the Still Creek watershed ISMP study and a presentation was made to Council to present the report for comment and discussion.

The Still Creek ISMP is a joint project by Burnaby, Vancouver and the GVRD. The Still Creek watershed includes 30 square kilometres of highly urbanized area of which 65% is located in Burnaby with the remaining 35% in Vancouver.

Still Creek, once a salmon bearing stream, has changed through culverting, channelization and relocation over the years due to the urbanization process. In the 1950's a major report produced by the Vancouver and Districts Joint Sewerage and Drainage Board (precursor to the GVRD) proposed that Still Creek be enclosed from Renfrew Street in Vancouver to the upper end of Burnaby Lake. This GVRD report set the direction for Still Creek and the subsequent culverting and channelization work.

In 1973, Burnaby adopted a report that embraced the principle of retaining Still Creek as an open waterway. Subsequent Council adopted policies on watercourse protection and stormwater management further strengthened the City's goal of protecting the City stream system and the environment and creating a sustainable community.

Throughout the last decade, the City has made significant progress towards achieving better storm water management and creating a healthier environment for all. ISMPs have been developed for the Byrne Creek, Stoney Creek, and Brunette watersheds, and many initiatives and action plans have since been advanced and incorporated in the development of land use and engineering infrastructure plans.

The Still Creek watershed is going through another phase of rapid redevelopment including the Brentwood Town Centre in Burnaby and the Grandview industrial area in Vancouver. Without a holistic approach, the redevelopment can place pressure on a fragile watershed environment leading to further flooding and environmental impacts. With this in mind, Burnaby, Vancouver and the GVRD, in consultation with watershed stakeholders, together developed a plan and a roadmap to follow as the Still Creek watershed redevelops over the next 50 years.

2.0 STILL CREEK ISMP REPORT OVERVIEW

A copy of the Still Creek ISMP Summary Report, entitled "From Pipe Dreams to Healthy Streams – A Vision for the Still Creek Watershed" is provided under separate cover.

2.1 Vision

The vision for the Still Creek watershed is:

"To protect or enhance the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and the human populations they support in an integrated manner that accommodates growth and development."

This vision embraces the value of nature as an essential part of our economy and one of the core values in the City’s community and infrastructure plans. Under this vision, by the year 2055, flooding would be reduced even where redevelopment continues to occur, watershed environmental health would be enhanced, and the Still Creek corridor would become a connected system of unique green areas for all to enjoy.

2.2 Plan

This Still Creek report focuses on three main components: stormwater management, recreation, and environment. The study integrates drainage management with environmental planning to address the impact of stormwater on environmental and recreational values. The report will be used as one of the infrastructure planning and land use planning tools for the watershed to reduce the cumulative impacts of development on the environment, and to shape the future of the drainage infrastructure.

The Still Creek ISMP encompasses eight goals which are outlined as follows:

Stormwater Management:

- Goal 1: Reduce flood impacts on people, property and the stream channel and strive to restore a more natural flow regime.
- Goal 2: Reduce stream erosion and downstream sedimentation to levels approaching a more natural system.

Environment:

- Goal 3: Protect and enhance streamside and aquatic habitats.
- Goal 4: Protect and enhance urban forest and terrestrial habitats.
- Goal 5: Protect and improve water quality.
- Goal 6: Maintain and augment native species biodiversity.

Recreation:

Goal 7: Connect people with the watershed and its streams.

Goal 8: Provide stream related education.

Based on the above goal statements, detailed strategies and over 100 action items were identified and recommended for future consideration. Many of the recommended action items are based on programs that are already underway. A sampling of the recommended action items are as follows:

- Designate a Still Creek Environmental Flood Channel Zone to prevent new construction of buildings into the flood zone or riparian corridor.
- Implement flood proofing bylaws for development within flood fringe zones.
- Conduct local area plans to investigate long-term opportunities for creating a green park and flood-cell corridor along Still Creek to Burnaby Lake. This green corridor would serve the growing town, village, and business centres at Brentwood and Holdom.
- Create an integrated network of trails, viewpoints, and other recreational facilities to enhance public enjoyment of Still Creek, its tributaries, and Burnaby Lake.
- Reduce hard surface area in the watershed by 10% by year 2025.
- Increase implementation of on-site run-off source control practices to improve run-off quality.
- Improve summer dissolved oxygen levels in Still Creek using aeration devices.
- Investigate the feasibility of neighbourhood scale stormwater management facilities to reduce peak flood discharges.

The Still Creek ISMP report includes many possible action items which will be further assessed by staff with respect to other corporate priorities. The action items that are of highest priority and meeting the financial and infrastructure requirements will be included in the future City Financial Plan discussion process.

3.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Since the initiation of the Still Creek ISMP project in 2003, five public open house and stakeholder meetings have been held to present the study, its goals and strategies and the draft report. A broad cross section of open house and workshop attendees including stream riparian owners, residents in the watershed, environmental stewardship groups, business owners and developers have attended the meetings and provided valuable input. Comments and suggestions received through the public process were included, where appropriate, in the draft report.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Still Creek watershed and its main stream – Still Creek – have been the subject of many studies and policies to address the flooding and environmental issues. In the past decade, Burnaby has adopted stormwater management principles to improve and protect the existing stream system and its environment. In recent years, Vancouver has also adopted policies to daylight sections of upper Still Creek that were enclosed in the earlier years to restore the open stream system.

Since 2003, Burnaby, Vancouver, and the GVRD have been working together to develop an ISMP for the Still Creek watershed that will provide a 50 year vision for the watershed and its stream system integrating the drainage, environmental and recreational values. The report is now complete and will be used to guide future policies and programs development with the goal of creating a sustainable watershed and protecting the environment and properties through better storm water management practices.

The Still Creek ISMP report contains many possible action items which will be further assessed with respect to other corporate priorities. The action items will be prioritized and included in the City’s financial and infrastructure discussion and Council approval process in the future. Staff recommend that the committee and Council give approval in principle to the vision, strategies and the recommended plan as outlined in the Still Creek ISMP report. Staff will finalize the report based on input from the Committee and Council and incorporate the report recommendations where appropriate, in the future development and infrastructure improvement programs.

To: *Environment Committee*
From: *Director Engineering*
Re: *Still Creek Watershed Integrated Stormwater
Management Plan (ISMP)*
2006 June 07..... Page 6

The City of Vancouver staff will be presenting the Still Creek ISMP report to their Council in the Fall of 2006 and will incorporate the plan into the overall Upper Still Creek (Vancouver section) redevelopment strategy.

W.C. Sinclair, P. Eng.
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING

J.S. Belhouse
DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING

LSC:cc/jb
Attachment

Copied to: City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Director Finance