

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
**CITY OF WHITE ROCK**  
CORPORATE REPORT



**DATE:** April 26, 2021

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Jim Gordon, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations

**SUBJECT:** Coldicutt Park Ravine – Permanent Closure

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

THAT Council:

1. Approve the permanent closure of the public crossing to the ravine at Coldicutt Park; and
  2. Approve the installation of a 2.5m high chain link fence with signage and a maintenance access gate at the northern access to the Coldicutt Park ravine and a 2.5m high chain link fence with signage and a maintenance access gate near the storm culvert at the bottom of the ravine in Coldicutt Park to facilitate the closure.
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Transport Canada expressed concern about the number of people trespassing on the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) right of way and railway tracks in order to access/egress the beach via the Coldicutt Park staircase. The City received Notices from Transport Canada ordering that the current access conditions be remediated, attached as Appendix A. BNSF also noted safety concerns about the trespasses.

Semiahmoo First Nation (SFN) advised that they are concerned about large numbers of people accessing the area at the foot of the ravine and specifically concerned about any excavations as this is an important archaeological site.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the permanent closure of the public crossing at Coldicutt Ravine Park.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION**

Not applicable.

**INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

At inspections on Friday, May 30, 2014 and on Monday June 2, 2014, Transport Canada observed large numbers of people trespassing at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) track at mile point 123.20 (the Coldicutt Park staircase).

Transport Canada noted that these conditions could reasonably be expected to develop into a situation in which a person could be injured or made to be ill or damage could be caused to the environment or property.

Subsequently, the City received a Notice from Transport Canada on June 6, 2014 (refer to Appendix A) citing:

“The unlawful trespassing and existing number of trains is putting persons at risk, this location is a major facilitator of excessive trespassing to and from the White Rock promenade.”

On February 10, 2021, Transport Canada safety inspectors met with City staff and reaffirmed that the Notice relating to Coldicutt Ravine will remain in force until the City of White Rock permanently restricts access so that pedestrians cannot access the tracks.

Transport Canada’s order provides two options for remediation:

1. Close the public crossing by installing a fence, minimum 6ft high, removable only to facilitate access for emergency services at any time; and
2. Close the public crossing and install a swing gate that can be opened at the discretion of the City to move a vehicle over and clear of the Railway. This option involves the installation of two 8ft high chain link fences with signage and maintenance access gates: one located at the Marine Drive entrance, and one located near the storm culvert in Coldicutt Ravine Park.

As public safety is paramount, it is recommended that Council approve the permanent closure of Coldicutt Ravine as outlined in Option 2.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is estimated that the fences and gates will cost \$25,000. Funds for this project are available from the Parks operating budget.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Although staff has not requested a legal opinion of the consequences of ignoring the Transport Canada order, Transport Canada has advised that they will request BNSF to begin train whistling if the City does not take remedial action.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Coldicutt Ravine Park is an archaeologically sensitive area. Any works, including fence installation, needs to be done in consultation with SFN.

Notification about the closure can be communicated through the City’s website, social media, and an advertisement in the local newspaper.

### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

Closing the Coldicutt Park ravine to public access will minimize maintenance activities to include only those activities necessary to maintain emergency and maintenance access. Less tree pruning, brush trimming and stairway maintenance will result in lower greenhouse gas emissions and a more natural Park condition.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

Closure of access to the ravine at Coldicutt Park is in alignment with the Council New Strategic Priority of “Our Environment” and consistent with the Value of Responsibility.

### **OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES**

The following alternative options are available for Council’s consideration:

1. Close the public crossing by installing a fence at the top of the ravine, minimum 2.5m high, removable only to facilitate access for emergency services at any time. This option would only provide access for emergency services. The City would not be able to access the ravine and culvert for maintenance.
2. Ignore the Transport Canada order. There are unknown legal implications to ignoring this order as well as the consequence that train whistling will occur.

### **CONCLUSION**

Transport Canada issued a Notice to the City because they observed “unlawful trespassing” on the BNSF railway south of the Coldicutt Park staircase that caused them safety concerns. The Notice relating to the ravine in Coldicutt Park will remain in force until such time access is permanently restricted so that pedestrians cannot access the tracks.

The Coldicutt Park ravine is also an archaeologically sensitive area that is best left with minimal disturbance.

For reasons of public safety, staff recommends that Council approve the permanent closure of the access to the ravine at Coldicutt Park.

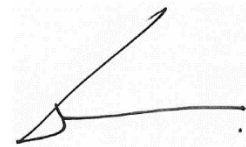
Respectfully submitted,



Jim Gordon, P.Eng.  
Director, Engineering and Municipal Operations

### **Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer**

I concur with the recommendations of this corporate report.



Guillermo Ferrero  
Chief Administrative Officer