

Costs double for Mosquito Creek Marina trail section

Jeremy Shepherd / North Shore News

April 12, 2016 05:11 PM



Cyclists cross at First Street and Mackay Road in North Vancouver, near the entrance to the Mackay Creek portion of the Spirit Trail, which will eventually connect Horseshoe Bay to Deep Cove. Go to nsnews.com to view a route map of the city's section. photo Mike Wakefield, North Shore News

Putting a price on the human spirit is impossible – putting a price on the Spirit Trail is only very, very difficult.

The cost of routing the Spirit Trail through Mosquito Creek Marina turned out to be more than double what the City of North Vancouver expected to pay, bringing the municipality's tab from \$2.8 million to \$5.9 million at a council meeting April 4.

The money will move the trail from Bewicke Avenue through the Squamish Nation's marina.

The city's initial appraisal failed to account for the amount of fill in the soil, the complexity of the terrain and the cost of building a pedestrian bridge over Mosquito Creek, according to a staff report.

"This is evidence of getting ahead of ourselves," said Coun. Pam Bookham, who cast the lone vote against supplying the extra \$3.1 million for the trail – mainly due to where the money came from.

The city rerouted \$1.15 million earmarked for the upcoming East Park & Tilford portion of the Spirit Trail and borrowed \$1.95 million from the Harry Jerome fund.

"We are being overly ambitious," Bookham warned. "Why do we have to involve Harry Jerome?"

The Harry Jerome rebuild fund stands at \$11.5 million. With the total cost of rebuilding the rec centre expected to eclipse \$100 million, there is no way that money could be spent this year, said city staff. The city plans to top up the Harry Jerome fund in the fall 2016 budget. Replacement funding for the East Park & Tilford segment is scheduled for 2017.

Bookham warned the city could be caught off guard if emergency repairs are needed at the antiquated fitness centre.

The city's financial footwork is just common sense, countered Coun. Holly Back. "If we borrow the money, we're borrowing from ourselves."

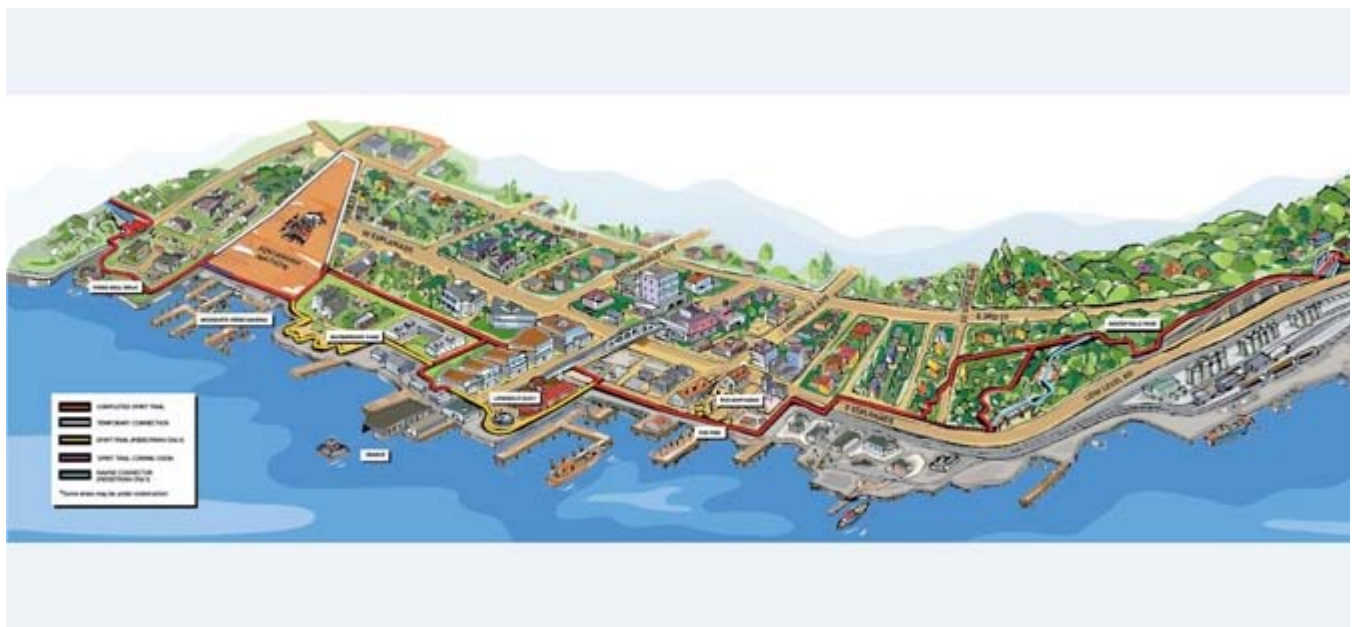
Connecting Harbourside to Lower Lonsdale is critical to reduce pedestrian traffic on Third Street, added Coun. Linda Buchanan. "When we're looking at the amount of activity going on in Harbourside, it just makes sense to get this piece through."

Getting this piece through has been more difficult than expected. Plans for a trail connection through the boat-lift area had to be kiboshed for safety reasons when staff realized the trail would have to be opened and closed every time a boater got in or out of the water.

An idea to have the Spirit Trail run parallel to CN Rail tracks was deemed unpalatable and a plan to run the trail up Forbes Avenue, across Third Street and down Bewicke was also squashed; partly because of accessibility concerns.

Once the Mosquito Creek path is open to cyclists and strollers, the city will be one segment away from completing its portion of the Spirit Trail, scheduled for 2017.

The finished trail is designed to wind 35 kilometres through the entire North Shore, from Deep Cove to Horseshoe Bay.



Source: City of North Vancouver website