

# Metro Vancouver could offload some regional parks to cities

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Burnaby Lake Regional Park is one of 22 regional parks operated by Metro Vancouver.  
Pacific Parklands Foundation

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Metro Vancouver may cut costs by turning some of its regional parks over to local municipalities to stop inefficiently duplicating their efforts.

The regional district is embarking on a wide-ranging service review of its [regional parks system](#) that will report back with a draft report by summer and final recommendations by fall.

Regional directors increasingly question Metro's role at some parks, saying it makes little sense for regional district and municipal parks crews to work in close proximity.

Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts said Surrey crews could probably easily take over the maintenance of Tynehead Regional Park in the midst of her city.

In some parts of North Vancouver, where regional, provincial and municipal parks abut each other, three separate sets of workers and managers are responsible.

"It just doesn't make sense to have three different land agencies monitoring the same trail within 300 metres," North Vancouver District Mayor Richard Walton said at an April 18 Metro committee.

Also to be probed is why Metro still runs regional parks like Sumas Mountain and Matsqui Trail in the Abbotsford area, even though that city is in the separate Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD).

"They're grown up now, they're a big city," Delta Mayor Lois Jackson said of Abbotsford. "I wonder if the same reasoning applies now."

Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie also questioned whether Metro's responsibility for regional parks east of its borders also leaves it on the hook for buying more parkland there.

Directors suggested the FVRD might take on the Metro parks there.

Metro needs to either find more revenue or cut costs to free up millions of dollars it estimates are needed to upgrade aging facilities and infrastructure at existing parks, as well as bankroll an ambitious program of [acquiring](#) more parkland.

Regional planners want to add 5,500 hectares of land to the park system at an estimated cost of \$1.1 billion over 30 years.

Tremendous investment is also needed to make the proposed Experience the Fraser trail network a reality instead of mainly a plan on paper.

Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan said he wants a "real hard look" at the role Metro plays in running parks and whether it makes more sense for local cities to take them on.

He noted Metro couldn't afford to dredge Burnaby Lake Regional Park so his city had to cover the cost.

"If you can't service a park, you can't invest in a park, why would you keep acquiring parks?" Corrigan asked.

The review will examine the parks function's relevance and look at potential different operating models. Parks deemed regionally or ecologically significant are unlikely to be offloaded.

Corrigan was skeptical as to whether Metro staff will deliver "dispassionate" findings that might result in them losing jurisdiction over some parks.

Metro has more than 14,500 hectares of parkland in 22 regional parks, five greenways, two ecological conservancy areas and four regional reserves.

Lynn Headwaters, Belcarra, Pacific Spirit, Campbell Valley, Colony Farm and Surrey Bend are among the larger Metro regional parks.

