

Mayor's Report

Responding to the Increasing Number of Regional Park Visitors

The exceptional period of good weather this past summer also meant an exceptional number of visitors to [Belcarra Regional Park](#) on many weekends. Spill-over parking by [Sasamat Lake](#) visitors extended along Bedwell Bay Road as far south as Watson Road. Similarly, the limited amount of visitor parking at the [Belcarra picnic grounds](#) resulted in park visitors driving through the village to park their cars on Midden Road and along Bedwell Bay Road as far north as the tennis courts.

[MV Parks Department](#) traffic counts show 700,000 visitors/year coming to [Belcarra Regional Park](#), with approximately two-thirds going to Sasamat Lake and one-third going to the picnic grounds. The population of [Metro Vancouver](#) has increased by one million people over the past 20 years and is predicted to grow by another one million people over the next 20 years. Since 'Belcarra Regional Park' is considered the 'Stanley Park' of Metro Vancouver's Northeast Sector, it follows that the number of park visitors will continue to increase in proportion to population growth.

One of the motivations for wanting to manage park visitor parking is concern for the safety of pedestrians and bicycle traffic along Bedwell Bay Road, as well as the safety of the park visitors themselves who are at risk while walking along the road when departing from, and returning to, their parked vehicles. The safe movement by Belcarra residents is also being impacted by the parking issues created by regional park visitors, including concerns of residents living along Bedwell Bay Road about increased safety issues due to additional non-resident park traffic. Accordingly, it is time to implement management procedures and strategies to address the problem, and the following actions need to be pursued by the municipality:

- **Update Parking Bylaw** – Belcarra's current [parking bylaw](#) needs to be updated with emphasis on parking along Bedwell Bay Road from Sasamat Lake south to Watson Road and from Midden Road north to the tennis courts.
- **Implement Municipal Ticketing** – A [Municipal Ticket Information](#) (MTI) system needs to be implemented to simplify the prosecution of minor local government bylaw matters such as parking tickets. To make use of municipal ticketing, the municipality must adopt a bylaw that lays out the key elements of how ticketing will work, including:
 - which offences are subject to municipal ticketing;
 - what penalties may be imposed for each offence; and
 - who can issue the municipal ticket for each offence.

An MTI bylaw can allow one or several classes of persons, such as police officers, bylaw enforcement officers, and local assistants to the Fire Commissioner, to issue tickets for any given offence. In this way, individuals with specialized knowledge of the bylaw at question may be authorized to apply that knowledge to the issue of a ticket.

- **Implement Bylaw Adjudication** – Belcarra needs to implement a [Bylaw Adjudication System](#) to avoid the cost of formal court proceedings that result when bylaw infractions are disputed. A 'Bylaw Adjudication' [presentation](#) was recently made to Council by [Rick Beauchamp](#), former Director of Corporate Services for West Vancouver, who participated in the bylaw adjudication pilot project conducted by the three North Shore municipalities.

Many Belcarra residents have also commented on the parking issues created by regional park visitors, and residents are invited to provide Council with their thoughts and ideas regarding the foregoing. Council will be considering potential management strategies early in the new year with the objective of having the "tools" in place for the annual onslaught of regional park visitors next summer.

**Ralph Drew
Mayor**

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