



June 30, 2020

To: Mayor Haynes and Council
Cc: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager of Parks, Saanich
Suzanne Samborski, Director, Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Mount Douglas Park is featured on the Saanich Parks, and Recreation, and Community Services website as a Natural Area in Saanich. Members of the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society have a long history of very active engagement in maintaining, preserving and advocating for the natural space that is Mount Douglas Park. We know the fragility of these natural green spaces. Indeed, the Saanich Parks, Recreation & Community Services website acknowledges this:

'Impacts from urban pressures and invasive species continue to be managed through restoration projects and volunteer stewardship, helping connect people to nature.'

<https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation-community/parks/natural-areas.html>

We also draw Council's attention to [District of Saanich Park Natural Areas Management Guidelines](#) where it states:

- "The rare and valuable natural resources within the park natural areas must be protected."
- Ensure "that land use decisions consider the complex interactions and dynamic nature of park ecosystems and their finite capacity to withstand and recover from stress induced by human activities."
- "The carrying capacity of the park natural areas will be challenged as use increases"

We understand a temporary use permit for a Pilot Program for Food Trucks at 4500 Cedar Hill Road (lower Mount Douglas Park; File TUP00025) is being considered and if approved it may begin in 2020 or 2021. Operating food trucks in parks is new to Saanich. Although there might be some appropriate food truck locations elsewhere, Mount Douglas Park is not one of them and **we are vehemently opposed to this pilot program in Mount Douglas Park** for the following reasons:

- Mt. Douglas Park does not need to 'further enliven select parks by offering food and beverage items for sale'. **The draw is and should continue to be the park itself and its natural setting.**
- We believe that recent increases in Park visitors has already far outstripped the carrying capacity of the Park with the current level of maintenance.
- Food trucks that rely on power generation add noise to green spaces, drowning out the natural sounds within the park. We did a [Park Soundscape study](#) and found power generators, even meeting mandated sound levels, are a harsh disturbance in a quiet park.

- While we understand the vendor will be responsible for supplying the garbage, recycling and compost bins, there will be an increase in garbage and litter. We continue to regularly observe visitors carrying fast food containers and drinks along the trails and too often discarding them along the way.
- Current garbage bins are not sufficient, nor large or secure enough to prevent birds and animals from picking and the frequent wind blows the garbage through the park and likely into highly sensitive creek area which has experienced significant restoration efforts. All too often the bins are overflowing, especially in the beach parking area.
- Litter and refuse attract wasps and hornets.
- Reminders will need to be posted regarding proper disposal of refuse. Our experience is that many visitors to the park do not dispose of their garbage in the provided bins. We regularly observe and pick up garbage that has been strewn about the park and parking lots.
- Increased traffic that includes vehicles, people, and dogs trampling the grounds.
- Traffic congestion in parking lot at Ash and Cordova Bay Road intersection.
- Required social distancing of patrons could result in increased pedestrian traffic and hazard in the parking lot, as well as trampling of the grassy areas.

The staff report to Council, includes a twelve-page list of reasons why food trucks should not be in Mount Douglas Park, ending with what appears to be a loophole aimed to outmaneuver every long-standing bylaw, zoning regulation and policy in Saanich.

People go to Mount Douglas Park to hike, to enjoy nature and some to picnic with no expectation of food or beverage service. It is one of the few, quiet, large green spaces in Saanich, drawing visitors to focus on and enjoy it for what it offers: wildlife, magnificent trees, and flora, not invasive species that are food trucks.

Sincerely,

Darrell Wick, President
On Behalf of the FMDPS Board