



Date: October 23, 2003

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Quilchena Park Concept Plan**

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## RECOMMENDATION

**A. THAT the Board approve the Quilchena Park Concept Plan as described in this report and illustrated in Appendix A.**

## POLICY

*The Park Board has a long-standing practice of providing additional park land or, alternatively, upgrading existing parks in neighbourhoods experiencing population growth.*

## BACKGROUND

In 1998, City Council approved the rezoning of Arbutus Gardens (1925 West 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue), leading to a doubling of the density permitted on the site. The project's population will likely double, from about 500 residents to 1,000 or more residents. At the time of rezoning, the City secured a Community Amenity Contribution of \$1.9 million from the developer, to be used for improvements in the neighbourhood. In June 2002, Park Board and City Council approved the allocation of \$450,000 to a major upgrade of Quilchena Park, noting that a further \$100,000 could be allocated to this project once sufficient funds were paid by the developer.

Park Board staff began the planning for the improvements at Quilchena Park in early 2003. The landscape architectural firm of Durante Kreuk Ltd. was selected to assist with the preparation of a concept plan for Quilchena Park.

## DESCRIPTION OF PARK

Quilchena Park is bounded by Valley Drive, 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, the Arbutus Rail Corridor and 30th Avenue. The park is 7.7 hectares (19 acres) in size, which makes it one of the largest neighbourhood parks on the West Side. The park was created in the 1960s when the Canadian Pacific Railway closed down the Quilchena Golf Course and developed much of the land for housing.



Quilchena Park is a very scenic park, with many mature trees and large meadows. It has wonderful views of Bowen Island and Cypress Mountain from the south end of the park. The park includes two soccer fields, two ball diamonds, a 9-hole disc golf course, an off-leash dog area, a children's playground, change rooms, public washrooms and a caretaker suite.



## **GOALS FOR PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

The proposals for park improvements have to strike a balance between providing additional activities in the park and making the park useable to a growing population on the one hand, and maintaining the park's scenic qualities and minimizing impacts of park activities on nearby residents on the other hand.



A June 2002 report to the Board identified these goals for Quilchena Park:

- provide more activities in the park;
- reduce impact of existing park activities on nearby residents;
- make park useable for all seasons.

The report suggested that a focus on passive park enjoyment was deemed appropriate, and additional or alternative ideas may be generated through a public process.

Staff identified a number of specific issues that should be addressed in the proposed park improvements:

- drainage in the park is generally poor;
- there are no walking paths in the park; and
- some dog owners allow their dogs off-leash on the playfields instead of in the designated off-leash area.

## **PRELIMINARY CONCEPT PLAN**

The preliminary concept plan was prepared in June 2003 and included the following elements:

- improved drainage;
- a perimeter walking path (about 1 km in length) to be constructed in gravel;
- a shorter paved walking path (about 0.4 km in length) aimed at residents who have reduced mobility and prefer walking on smooth surfaces;
- additional walking paths leading to the public washrooms, the children's playground and the playfields;
- improved entrances into the park;
- more trees and shrubs;

- additional benches;
- reorganizing the off-leash area in a way that would make it more clearly demarcated by pathways and shrubs;
- relocating the disc golf tees and baskets to minimize conflicts with pedestrians using the perimeter path;
- creating a youth area that would include a neighbourhood skateboard park and a half-court of basketball;
- creating a zone in the northwest corner of the park for picnicking and the occasional special event, including the construction of a picnic shelter.

## **SKATEBOARD FACILITY**

The idea of creating a skateboard facility at Quilchena Park was generated after staff heard about a petition from students at Prince of Wales High School asking for a skateboard park in the neighbourhood. Staff consulted with the Vancouver Skatepark Coalition and decided it was worth examining whether Quilchena Park could be a suitable site for a skateboard facility.

The intent would be to create a “neighbourhood skatepark” and not a “destination skatepark”. A neighbourhood skatepark would be designed to meet the needs of teenagers and young adults living in the neighbourhood (within 1 km or 2 km of the park). It would be aimed at the novice to moderate skateboarder and be relatively small in size (about the size of one tennis court). The recently built skateboard facility at Strathcona Park is the best example we have in Vancouver of a neighbourhood skatepark.

In determining whether Quilchena Park could be a suitable site for a neighbourhood skatepark, staff used the following criteria:

- access to public washrooms and drinking fountain;
- does not result in displacing a valuable use or group of users;
- visible from nearby streets or buildings in order to minimize illegal activity or nuisance behaviour at the facility; and
- not situated too close to housing, so that residents are not negatively impacted by noise created by skateboarding.

Quilchena Park has public washrooms and a drinking fountain. The proposed location within the park (between the caretaker building and the children’s playground) was selected because: a) it did not displace a valuable use; b) it is close to the caretaker suite for surveillance reasons; and c) it is about 100 metres away from the closest house, which is located on the east side of the Arbutus Rail Corridor.

Staff examined other parks in the vicinity (King Edward Avenue to 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Granville Street to MacKenzie Street) as alternatives to placing a skatepark at Quilchena Park. Ravine Park was not considered because it cannot physically accommodate a skatepark. Arbutus Village Park was ruled out because a skatepark there would be too close to residential units (30 metres or less). Prince of Wales Park was ruled out because it does not have public washrooms nor a

caretaker suite for surveillance. Kerrisdale Park would be challenging because the vast majority of the park is allocated to Kerrisdale Arena, two ball diamonds, the playfield and the athletic track. Staff concluded that Quilchena Park is generally well suited to accommodate a skatepark, especially when comparing to other parks in the neighbourhood.

Staff proposed that the skatepark be combined with a half-court of basketball so that Quilchena Park would be able to offer teenagers and young adults more than skateboarding as a drop-in activity. The reason why only a half-court was proposed is because full basketball courts are offered at four nearby schools. The proposal for a combined neighbourhood skatepark and half-court of basketball was called the youth area.

## **PICNIC SHELTER**

The idea of providing a picnic shelter at Quilchena Park was generated after discussions with members of the Hellenic Community Centre. Initially, the Hellenic Community Centre had expressed an interest in having a covered facility that would be suitable for a handful of special events such as the annual “Greek Days” festival. The notion of having a gazebo structure was included in the report to the Board in June 2002.

After further analysis, staff believed that a picnic shelter would be more appropriate for Quilchena Park than a gazebo, since a picnic shelter could accommodate not only picnics but be used as a base for the occasional special event in the park. The shelter could also be an appropriate location for Tai Chi during the rainy season when the picnic tables could be removed.

As with other picnic shelters in Vancouver, a picnic shelter at Quilchena Park could be reserved by contacting the Park Board. This would also apply in the case of special events - the Hellenic Community Centre would be required to obtain a permit from the Park Board before hosting any event in the Park.

## **PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE**

A public open house was held on Wednesday, June 18, 2003 from 5 pm to 8 pm at the Hellenic Community Centre, which is located just north of Quilchena Park, in order to get feedback on the preliminary concept plan. Advertizing for the open house included: two sign boards installed in the park, ads in the Vancouver Courier and Ming Bao newspapers, and letters to all houses located within two blocks of the park (about 500 letters).

The open house was very well attended, with about 150 people dropping in during the three hour session. 138 questionnaires were filled in, of which 103 were filled in by residents living within a five minute walk of Quilchena Park. The following table displays the results:

<b>RESULTS BASED ON RESIDENTS LIVING NEAR QUILCHENA PARK (103 QUESTIONNAIRES)</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Not sure / no answer</b>
<b>Proposal to construct a perimeter pathway</b>	79%	12%	10%
<b>Proposal to construct a picnic shelter</b>	29%	50%	20%
<b>Proposal to construct the youth area</b>	35%	58%	7%
<b>Proposal to reorganize the off-leash dog area</b>	33%	31%	36%

A significant majority of the 103 residents at the open house supported the proposal to construct a perimeter pathway. Although there was quite a variety of responses regarding the type of surface for the pathway, a concern expressed by many is to consider the aesthetics of the park, leading most to suggest a non-asphalt surface (75% chose a surface other than asphalt):

- 51% want wood chips;
- 16% want asphalt;
- 15% want gravel;
- 9% want gravel or wood chips;
- 1% wants asphalt or gravel;
- 9% stated no preference.

Half of the 103 residents at the open house do not want a picnic shelter at Quilchena Park. Reasons cited included: a) the picnic shelter will be a place to hangout late at night and create noise for residents living nearby; b) the picnic shelter would become an extension of the Hellenic Community Centre; and c) the picnic shelter will generate extra garbage and likely become an eyesore.

About 60% of the 103 residents at the open house oppose the construction of a youth area, including a skateboard facility. Reasons cited included: a) the youth area will be too noisy; b) the youth area will lead to unruly behaviour, graffiti and crime; c) the youth area will be in concrete and asphalt, which does not match the character of Quilchena Park; and d) there are more suitable sites elsewhere for a youth area.

The residents at the open house were even split regarding the off-leash dog area, noting that one-third did not give an answer or were not sure about the proposal to reorganize the off-leash dog area.

## **PUBLIC MEETING**

A meeting of the Board's Planning and Environment Committee was held on Tuesday, September 16, 2003 from 7 pm to 9:30 pm at Kerrisdale Community Centre. Advertising for the meeting included: two sign boards installed in the park, ads in the Vancouver Courier and Ming Bao newspapers, and letters to all houses located within two blocks of the park (about 500 letters). About 225 people attended the meeting. People were seated at twelve tables and were asked to fill in a questionnaire as a group at each table.

The following key qualities for Quilchena Park were identified: large park, open green space, many trees, views, quiet/tranquil, and uses that co-exist with each other and blend into the park setting. The following key deficiencies for Quilchena Park were noted: poor drainage, lack of walking paths, and insufficient parking.

There is general support for the perimeter pathway, the reorganized off-leash dog area and improving drainage in the park. There is little support for the picnic shelter and the half-court of basketball.

There is still split opinion regarding the skateboard facility: the majority of residents who do not skateboard or have no children that skateboard are opposed to the facility, while the majority of those who skateboard and their parents support the facility.

Those who support the facility cited the following reasons: a) skateboarding is a healthy form of exercise; b) skateboarding in the park will be safer than skateboarding on nearby streets; c) a skateboard facility at Quilchena Park will mean that teenagers can practice this activity in their neighbourhood (as opposed to travelling more than 7 km to get to the nearest skateboard park). Those who oppose the facility reiterated the reasons noted in the previous section.

The following sites were mentioned as alternate locations for the proposed skateboard facility: Prince of Wales Park, Kerrisdale Park, Kerrisdale Centennial Park, Maple Grove Park, Fraser River Park, Balaclava Park, Memorial West Park, Chaldecott Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, Stanley Park, Vanier Park, Kitsilano Park, Jericho Park, Spanish Banks Park, UBC, and school grounds in general.

## **FINAL CONCEPT PLAN**

Given the low level of support amongst nearby residents, staff have removed the following elements from the concept plan: the picnic shelter and the half-court of basketball.

Staff continue to believe that a neighbourhood skateboarding facility at Quilchena Park is reasonable. The park and the specific location selected within the park meet basic locational criteria, i.e. Quilchena Park is a suitable site for the type of skateboarding facility proposed. Suggested alternate locations in the immediate neighbourhood (Prince of Wales Park and Kerrisdale Park) have significant challenges, more so than Quilchena Park.

In order to be successful, the skateboard facility at Quilchena Park must: a) be designed for use by local teenagers and young adults (in terms of skill level and size), thereby avoiding it becoming a destination skateboard park; b) must not be lit at night (minimize the ability to congregate after dark); c) be designed to minimize noise traveling far away (likely involving the construction of grassy berms) while at the same time ensuring that visual access is maintained from several vantage points into the skateboarding area; and d) be designed in a creative way to ensure that the skateboarding area blends in as much as possible into this scenic park.

Staff therefore recommend that the final concept plan (see Appendix A) include the following:

- improved drainage;
- a perimeter walking path (about 1 km in length) to be constructed in gravel;
- a shorter paved walking path (about 0.4 km in length) aimed at residents who have reduced mobility and prefer walking on smooth surfaces;
- additional walking paths leading to the public washrooms, the children's playground and the playfields;
- improved entrances into the park;
- more trees and shrubs;
- additional benches;
- reorganizing the off-leash area in a way that would make it more clearly demarcated by pathways and shrubs;
- relocating the disc golf tees and baskets to minimize conflicts with pedestrians using the perimeter path; and
- providing a neighbourhood skateboard park in the area between the caretaker building and the children's playground.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The budget for this project is \$450,000, broken down as follows:

- Construction	\$ 338,000
- Contingency	\$ 45,000
- Consultant	\$ 45,000
- Staff & Overhead Charge	\$ 17,000
- Public Process	\$ 5,000
TOTAL	\$ 450,000

Park Board and City Council approved the use of \$450,000 from the Arbutus Gardens Community Amenity Contribution for the improvements at Quilchena Park in 2002.

Staff have estimated that the annual operating cost of maintaining Quilchena Park is about \$70,000. The proposed changes to the park will lead to an increase in operating costs of about \$19,000 per year, which will be submitted as an Added Basic request during the 2005 Operating Budget process.



## **NEXT STEPS**

Subject to the Board's approval of the concept plan, the Quilchena Park project will now move into the design development phase. A project manager will work with the landscape architectural consultant and nearby residents to iron out all design details (e.g. exact width of pathways, detailed design of skateboard facility, types of trees to be planted, locations of benches, etc.). This work can start this fall and be completed by January.

Once this step is complete, staff will prepare the tendering documents and tender the construction project. This could be completed by early spring. Construction could start in the Spring of 2004. A construction timeline of 4 to 6 months is anticipated, leading to a Fall 2004 completion date.

## **CONCLUSION**

After a very involved public consultation process, staff are recommending a final concept plan for improvements at Quilchena Park. The plan proposes to add a number of new elements in the park (pathways, entrances, skateboarding facility) and improve certain aspects of the existing park (drainage, off-leash dog area, disc golf course layout). It is believed that the plan will lead to a park that will be more useable throughout the year and one that offers residents a broader variety of passive and active uses, all this while maintaining as much as possible the park's scenic and green qualities.

Prepared by:

Planning & Operations  
Board of Parks & Recreation  
Vancouver, BC  
MD

# Appendix A - Quilchena Park Concept Plan



- LEGEND**
- a. Improved Park Entrance
  - b. Trails
  - c. Woodland Planting  
Park and Rehabilitation Planting On Forest Floor  
Tree Canopies Planted to Open Sightlines for Safety and Usability
  - d. Caretaker's Building
  - e. Washrooms
  - f. Skateboard Area
  - g. Existing Children's Playground
  - h. Viewpoint
  - i. Dog-Off-Leash Area
  - j. Sidewalk  
1.2m Wide Sidewalk at Top of Bank, Including 100' Freeboard Existing Trees
  - k. Seating Below Tree Canopy  
Tree Canopies Planted
  - l. Seasonal Pond
- Disc Golf
  - Bench

- PATHWAYS**
- Asphalt Stroll**  
20' Width at Length  
2 Meters Wide  
Pathway Through South-West Corner of Park, Accessible to Baby Strollers and Infants
  - Perimeter Walking/Jogging**  
6 Meters Wide at Length  
2 Meters Wide  
Maximum Grade of 5% for Accessibility
  - Secondary Access**  
Concrete Slabbed Throughout the Park  
1.2 Meters Wide  
Maximum Grade of 5% for Accessibility
  - Trails**  
Maintained Through Existing Trees  
2 Meters Wide  
Planned by Individualized Planting for Visual Interest

**Quilchena Park • Proposed Improvements**  
Board of Parks and Recreation City of Vancouver



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