



# PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING

## New Downtown Park at Smithe and Richards Final Design Plan

May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016



THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the final design plan for the new downtown park located at Smithe and Richards Streets as illustrated and described in this report.

# Guidelines and Strategies

- Park Board Strategic Framework
- Biodiversity Strategy
- Bird Strategy
- Greenest City Action Plan
- Citywide Playground Assessment
- Downtown South Public Benefits Strategy
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Healthy City Strategy
- Transportation 2040



Vancouver  
Bird Strategy

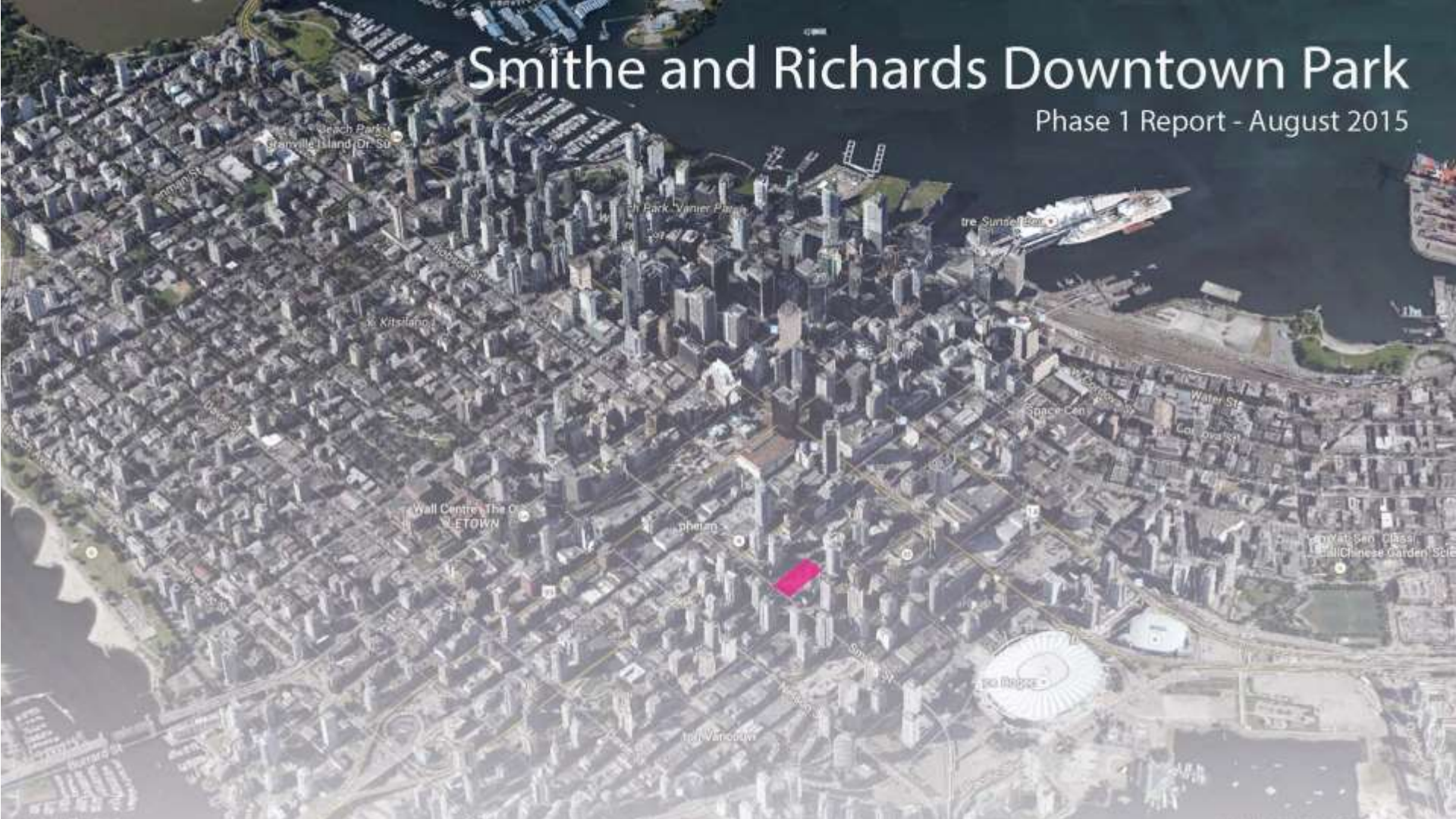


- Phase 1. Context Analysis and Open Space Needs Assessment
- Phase 2. Public Engagement and Conceptual Design
- Phase 3. Plan Revisions
- Phase 4. Board Approval
- Phase 5. Detailed and Technical Design
- Phase 6. Tendering and Contract Award
- Phase 7. Construction



# Smithe and Richards Downtown Park

Phase 1 Report - August 2015



# Context Analysis and Open Space Needs Assessment

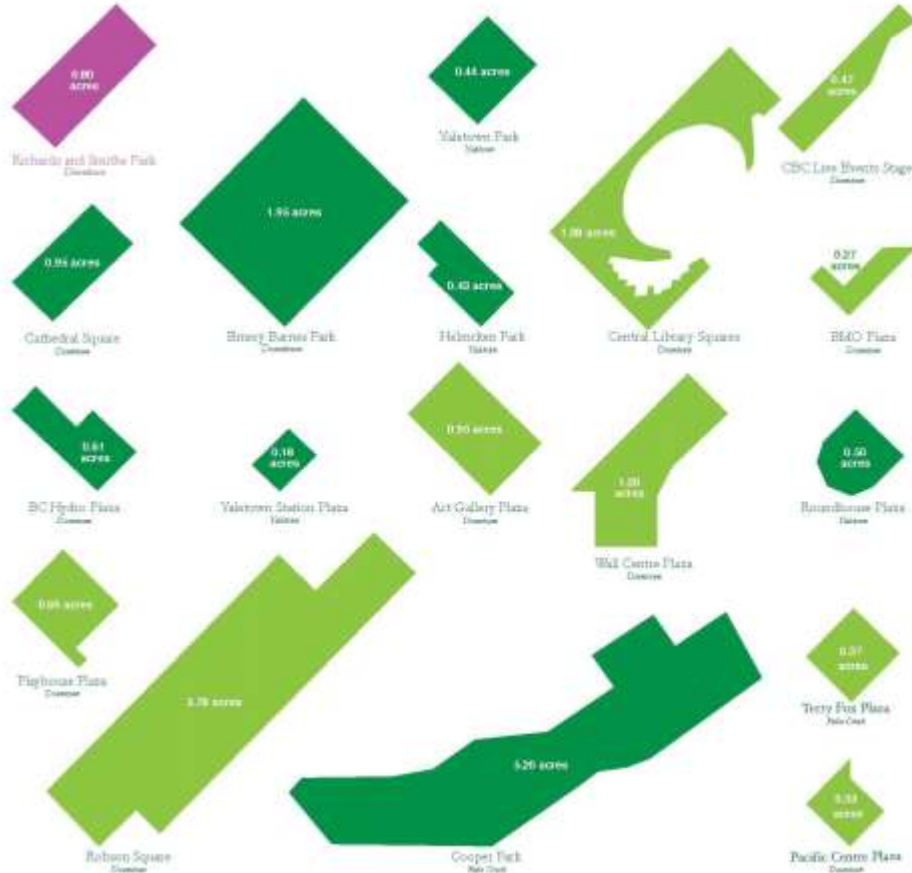


- Diverse community of 11,000 residents and nearly 18,000 employees that live and work within a 5-minute walk to the park
- 75% of the catchment population is composed of 20-40 year-olds
- Smithe and Richards are one-ways streets with bike lanes
- Laneway frames the south edge of the site
- 12 existing trees within and flanking the site

- 5m of grade drop across the site
- Solar access limited in mornings, late afternoon and evenings
- Noise is an issue needing to be addressed
- Lack of food and beverage amenities immediately south and west
- Primarily residential towers and ground floor retail surrounding the site



# Context Analysis and Open Space Needs Assessment

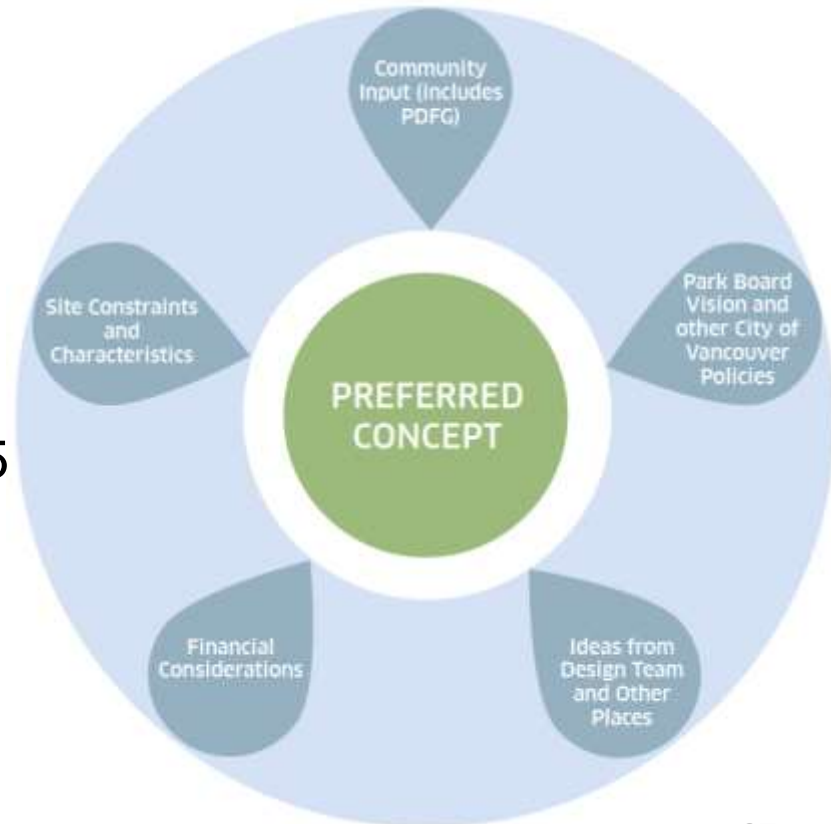


## Study Area

The study area was expanded beyond the 400m radius, partly because it became clear that not a great deal of parks and open spaces exist in this area, but also, as biking infrastructure and car share programs become increasingly utilized, the catchment of future park users will likely expand. An additional 800m radius was therefore selected, increasing the number of parks and open spaces that fall within this larger catchment and including them in the needs assessment list:

- |                              |                            |                                     |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Emery Barnes Park         | 7. Robson Square North     | 15. Roundhouse Turntable Plaza Park |
| 2. Yaletoen Park             | 8. Playhouse Plaza         | 16. Coopers' Park                   |
| 3. Helmcken Park             | 9. Pacific Centre Plaza    | 17. Terry Fox Plaza                 |
| 4. Central Library Square(s) | 10. Cathedral Square Park  |                                     |
| 5. CBC Live Events Stage     | 11. Wall Centre Plaza      |                                     |
| 6. Robson Square South       | 12. BMO Plaza              |                                     |
|                              | 13. Yaletoen Station Plaza |                                     |

- PDFG Meeting #1: June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- Open House #1: June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- Pop-Up City Hall: July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- PDFG Meeting #2: October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- Open House #2: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015
- PDFG Meeting #3: April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- Open House #3: April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- PDFG Meeting #4: May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016

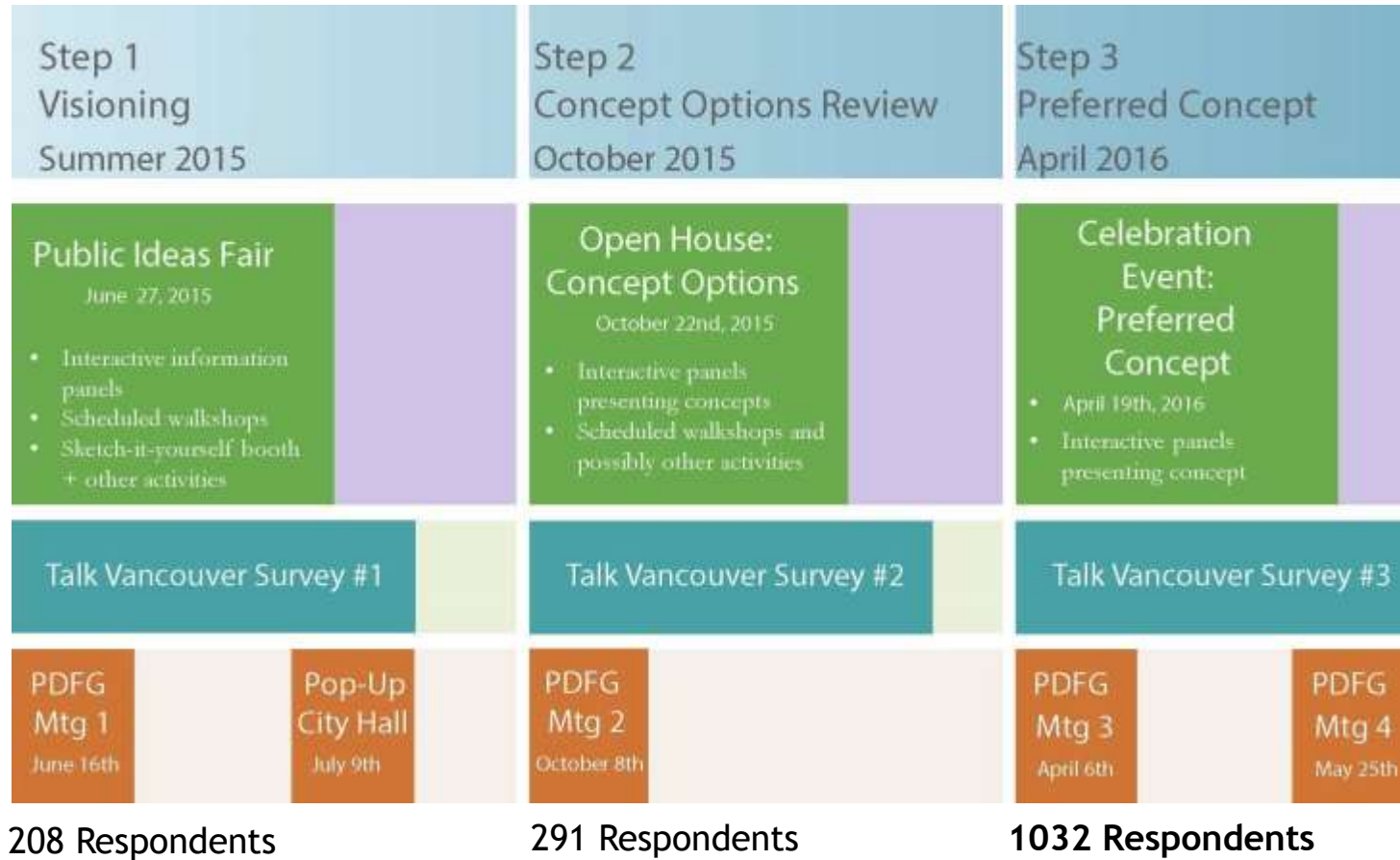


## Park Design Focus Group (PDFG) Members

- Vancouver Police Department
- Downtown Vancouver Association
- Directions Youth Services Centre
- Downtown Vancouver BIA
- Art-Starts in Schools
- Vancouver Public Space Network
- The Gathering Place
- The Roundhouse Society
- Vancouver Second Mile Society
- Family Services Greater Vancouver
- 2 - Nearby Strata Representatives
- 1 - Nearby Business Owner



# Public Engagement and Conceptual Design



# Feedback from Open House #3 and PDFG Meeting #3



# Feedback from Open House #3 and PDFG Meeting #3



## 1) How do you feel about the preferred design concept?

- 77% liked the design of the new park;
- 10% disliked the design of the new park;
- 12% are neutral; and
- 1% are unsure or don't know.

## 2) How often do you anticipate visiting this park after it is built?

- 25% will visit the park once a week or more;
- 29% will visit the park 1-3 times per month;
- 31% will visit the park less than once per month; and
- 15% are unsure or don't know.

## 3) How likely are you to purchase food or beverage from the facility shown in this design?

- 57% are likely to purchase food/beverage from the kiosk; and
- 43% are not likely to purchase food/beverage from the kiosk.

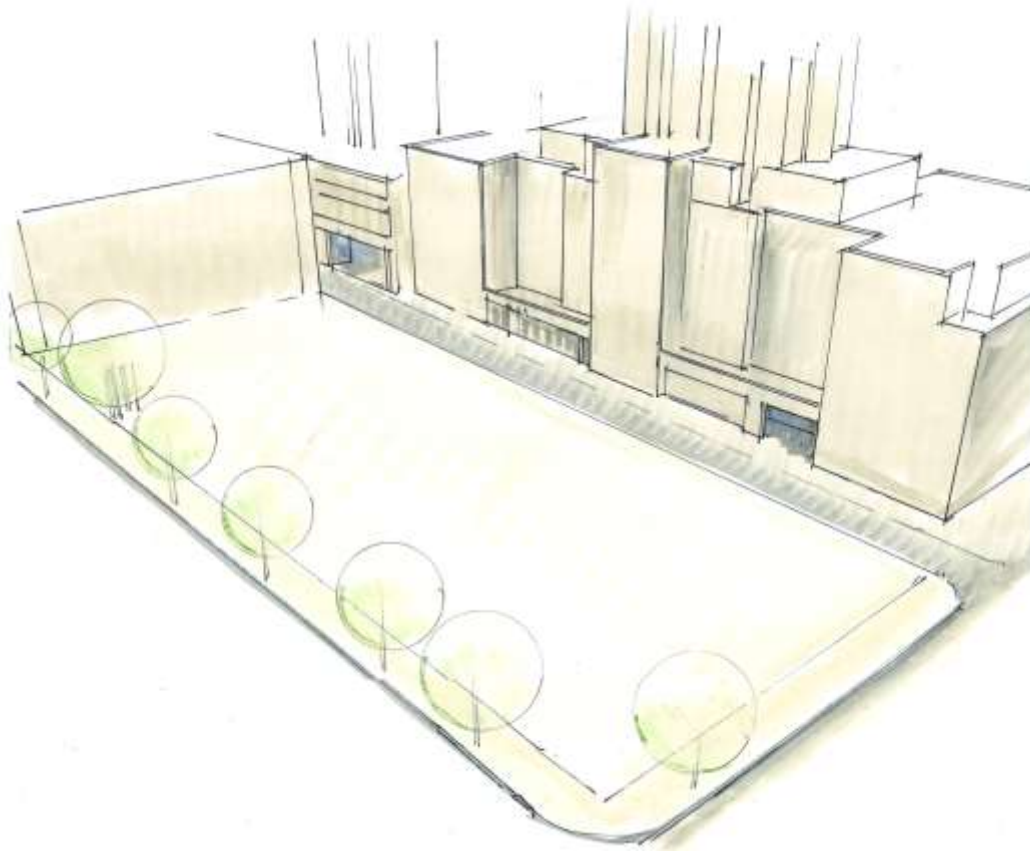
- 4) Are there any aspects of the design you don't like and you believe should be excluded?
- 44% of respondents answered this question;
  - Many responses were not related to ingredients that were desired to be excluded;
  - Aspirations to exclude proposed elements were directly related to a respondent's like or dislike of the park concept;
  - Desire to reduce the number of "sky-frames" from eleven (11), as originally proposed, to a lesser number that achieves the design intent;
  - Some felt "sky-frames" were too linear and that they could be softened/rounded in appearance;
  - Some respondents were concerned about the inclusion of a food/beverage amenity in the park - mainly this concern was based on notion that there were other coffee shops nearby.

5) Is there anything that was not included in the design that you believe would make the park better?

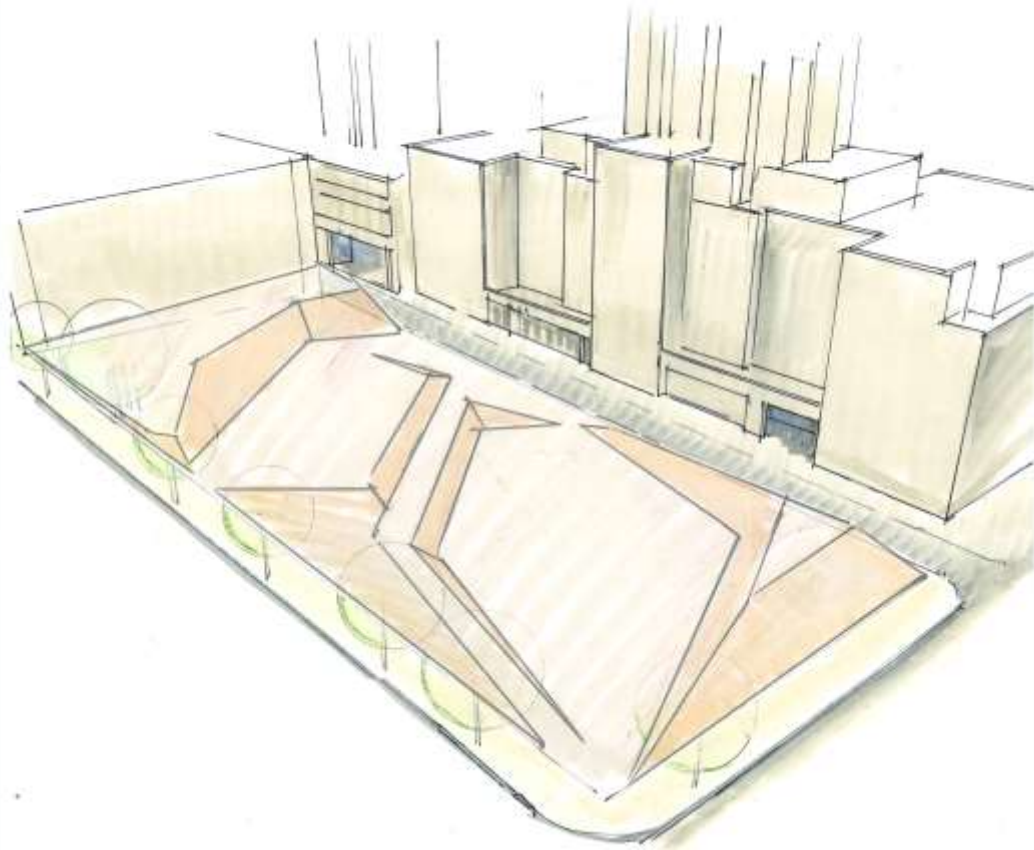
- Only 39% of respondents answered this question;
- Many requested an additional midway connection for ingress/egress to the overhead walkway;
- Request for porosity to the overhead walkway to prevent sleeping and loitering beneath the structure;
- Desire for an expanded landing for lingering and hanging out at the midway point of the overhead walkway;
- Include weather protection on the site so the park can be used year-round – if possible, in a way that doesn't promote loitering;
- Ensure that the park has splashes of colour to play off of the natural greens of landscape material; and
- Provide an area of open grass lawn for lying on a blanket and relaxing.



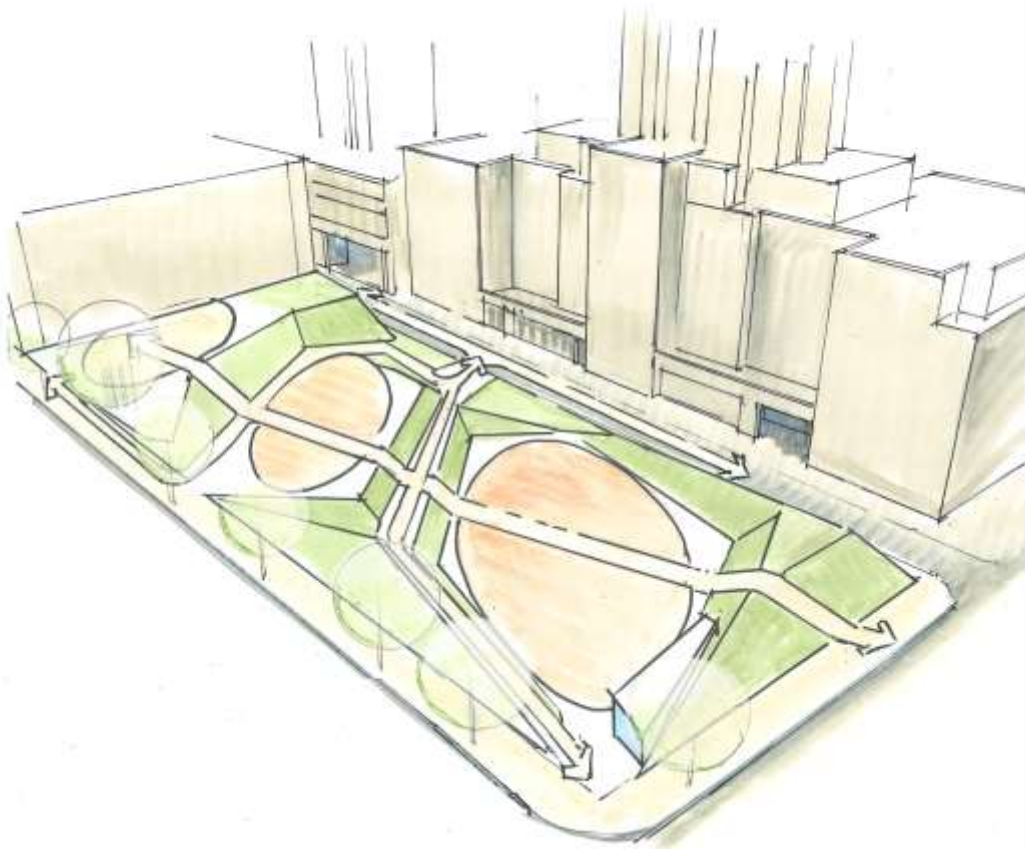
- 6) Do you have any additional comments you would like to provide?
- 37% of respondents answered this question;
  - Respondents felt that engagement process has been meaningful and they are excited for the addition of this new open space in their dense neighbourhood;
  - Responses emphasized the need for the park to be maintained to a high level to reflect the level of use that will be experienced on the site.
  - Most were pleased that this new park would stand-out as different and iconic relative to many of the parks in the City of Vancouver.



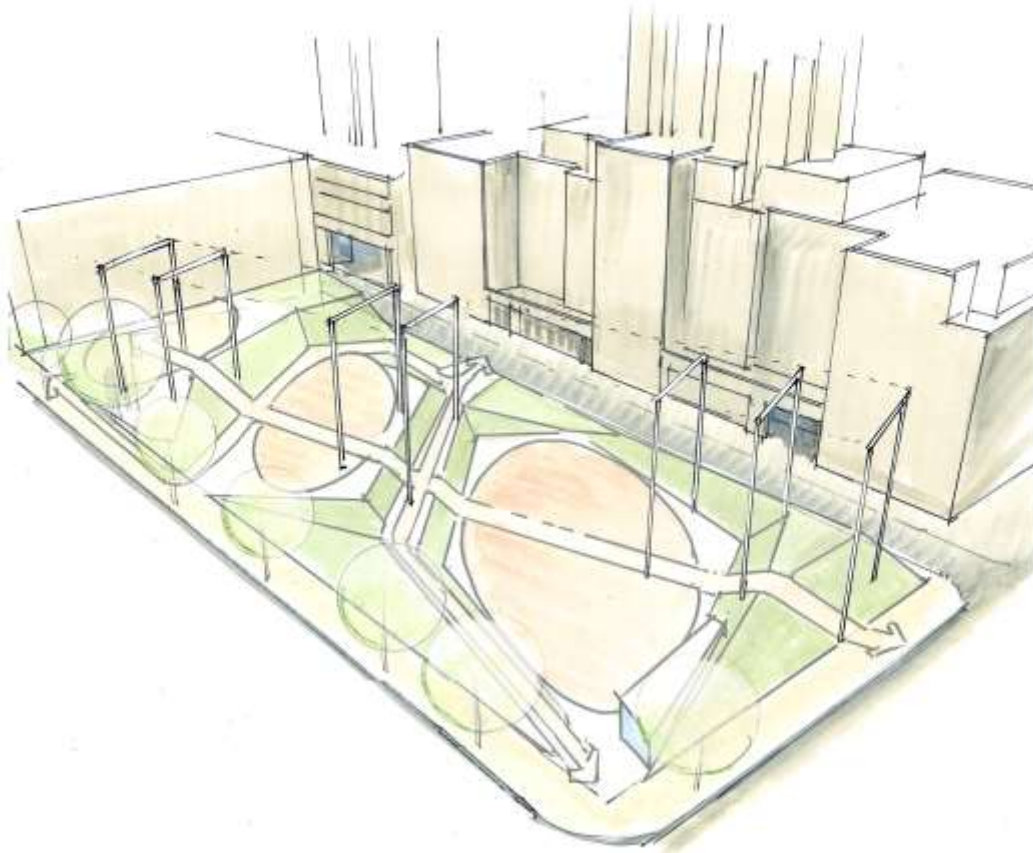
- Empty site with 5 meter slope from the north to the south
- Existing trees are maintained
- H-Frame Hydro poles are removed
- Lane is maintained



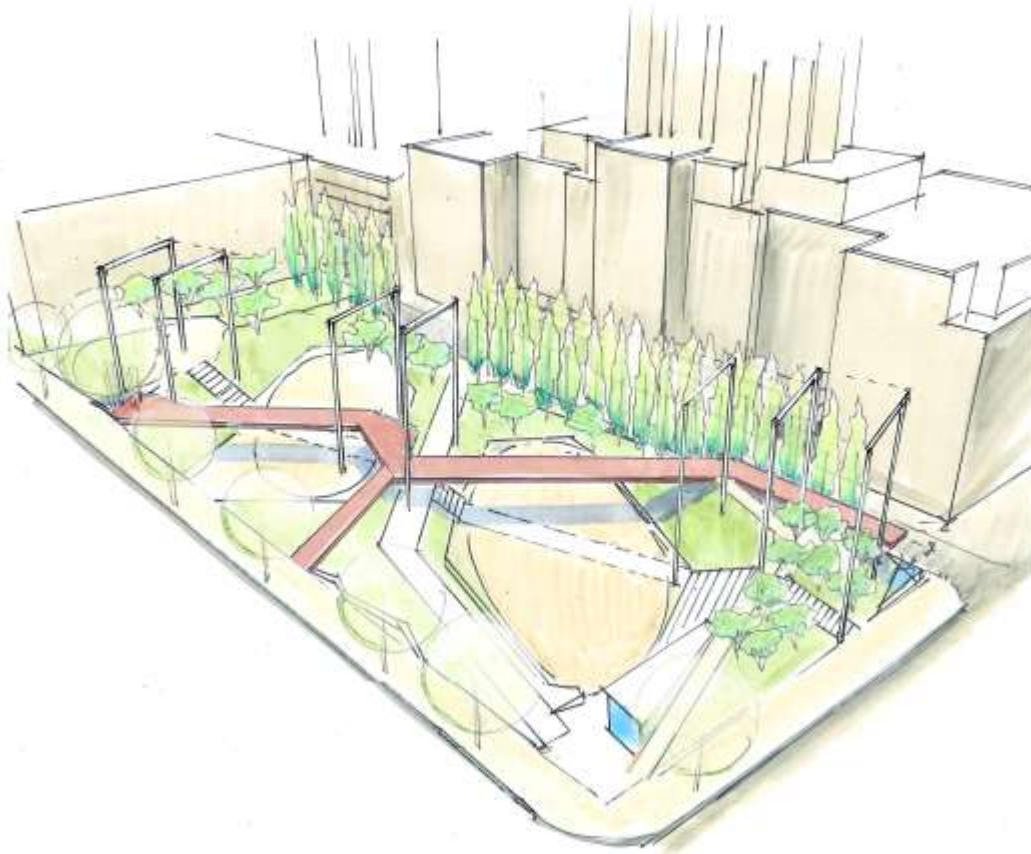
- Create usable flat areas to address the sloped site
- Berms and earthworks create definition framing the site and buffering noise from buildings and traffic



- Lush perennial, annual and tree planting will cover over half of the site
- Plantings will be raised where possible and on slopes to prevent trampling and pet-waste
- A single path bisects the site as the “crow flies” to connect Richards to Smithe
- Universally accessible pathways link the barrier-free park design

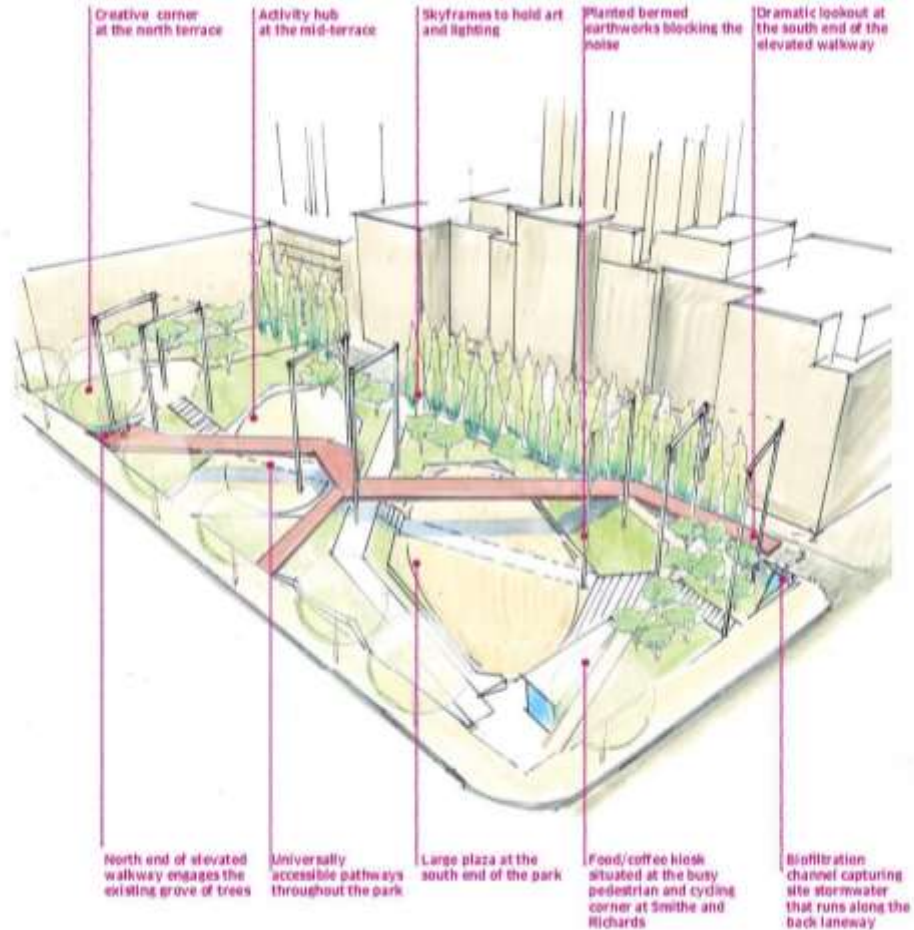


- “Skyframes” provide a sense of vertical scale relative to surrounding buildings
- Pay homage to property lot-lines, H-Frame utility poles and gateway to historical Recreation Park
- Iconic frames will suspend catenary lighting
- Curated with ephemeral art
- Create a dynamic park experience that evolves



- Elevated walkway creates a bold feature that weaves through the park
- Unique and barrier-free journey across the entire park and places to linger and view
- Acts as a playful armature, to suspend swings, hammocks and slides
- Passive surveillance
- Cantilevered lookout and gateway over Smithe Street

# Final Design



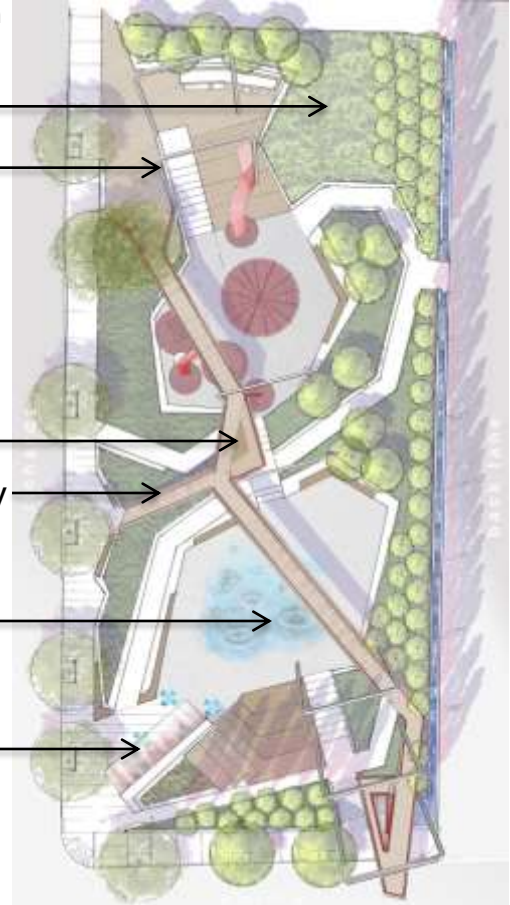
# Preferred Design vs. Final Design



Preferred Design

Final Design

- Open lawn area
- Rounded corners on skyframes
- Enlarged landing on raised walkway
- Additional connection to raised walkway
- Reduction in number of skyframes
- Retractable canopy on building







### Creative Corner

- This is quiet space is at the high point of the park, with views and shade dappled seating
- It would feature a community long table for meals, reading, and more
- It could also include art exhibits and other activities



### Lush and Biodiverse Naturescapes

- There are lots of diverse, native trees and other plants, creating a lush, green landscape
- These are in areas protected from primary activity areas, creating durability for this busy downtown area
- They offer informal seating edges along pathways



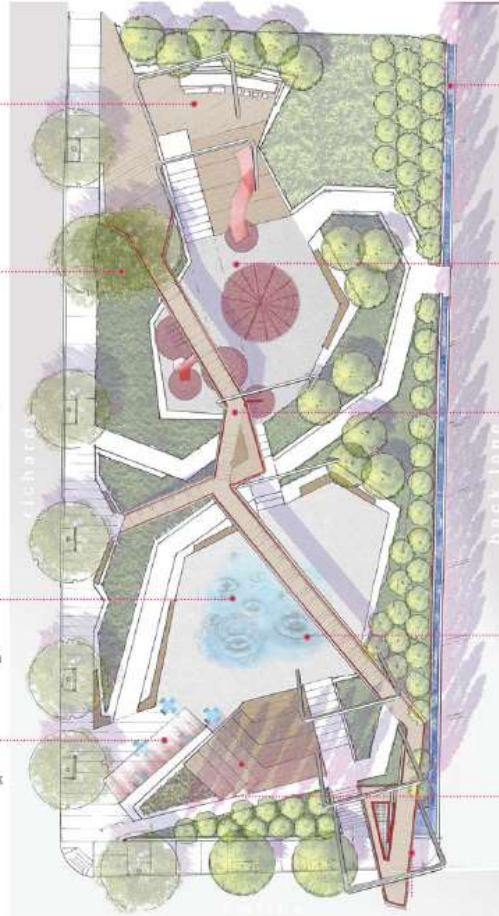
### Playful Water Feature

- This central water feature is located in the largest open space in the park
- When on, it can activate this space on a daily basis
- When off, it can make space for other activities



### Coffee and/or Food

- A small coffee and/or food kiosk at the corner will invite passersby into the park
- It will create people-activity, creating both social experiences and a sense of safety



### Back Lane and Rain Water

- A bio-filtration channel near the back lane collects, conveys, and cleans rainwater before it enters the storm system and ultimately False Creek
- It also creates a beautiful green amenity that links that park and laneway with a shared edge



### Active Play Area

- In the centre of the park, this terrace has good visual and physical connections to the rest of the park
- It would have custom play equipment and offer active play experiences for children of all ages



### Elevated Journey and Views

- An elevated, barrier-free walkway provides a short cut through the site
- It offers many raised vantage points above the park, providing views and supporting safety through "eyes on the park"
- This unique structure creates a "wow" moment for passersby on Smith Street, creating a strong sense of arrival in the Downtown from the east



### Programmable Space / Peoples' Plaza

- The lowest and largest terrace benefits from the most direct sunshine
- Beyond the playful waterjets, this hard surfaced area is designed to accommodate diverse activities, ranging from table tennis to makers fairs
- Whimsical hammocks and swings will be suspended from the elevated walkway above



### Sunny Seating Terraces

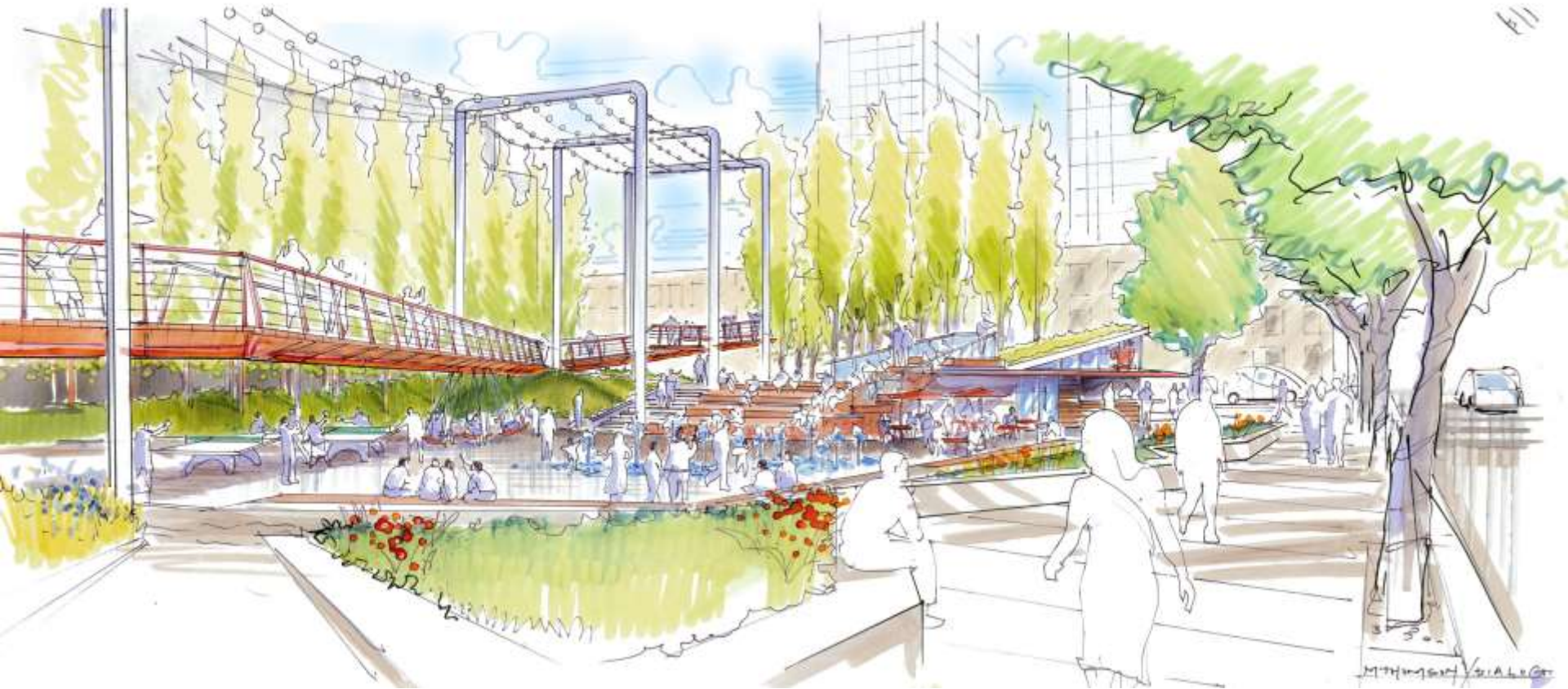
- This terraced seating areas is integrated into the coffee kiosk roof and overlooks the park
- These offer great views of life in the park, while doubling as an amphitheater during events
- A similar terraced seating area is situated near the Creative Corner in the north





MATT THUMSD / DIALOG

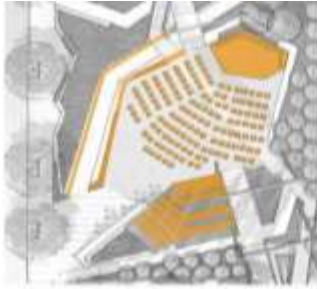
# Final Design



# Final Design - Park Building

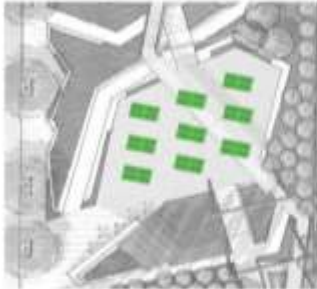
- Integrated in park slope
- Includes accessible universal park washrooms and storage for park programs
- Opportunity for food and beverage kiosk – coffee shop
- A request for proposals (RFP) for potential partners to be undertaken
- Coordination with Real Estate and Facilities needed





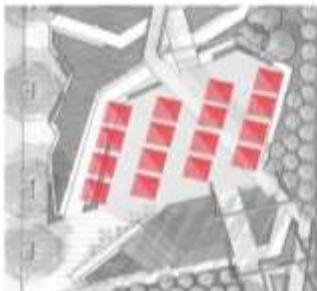
## Staged Events

- The lower plaza space would be designed to easily and quickly adapt to accommodate small staged events, such as acoustic music, theatre or poetry readings
- The types of potential staged events would have to take into consideration the relatively small size of space and be respectful of nearby residential buildings
- The elevated walkway would allow for maintained pedestrian circulation through the park, and would also provide views onto the event below and enable event lighting to be attached to the underside of the walkway structure



## Table Tennis Tournaments

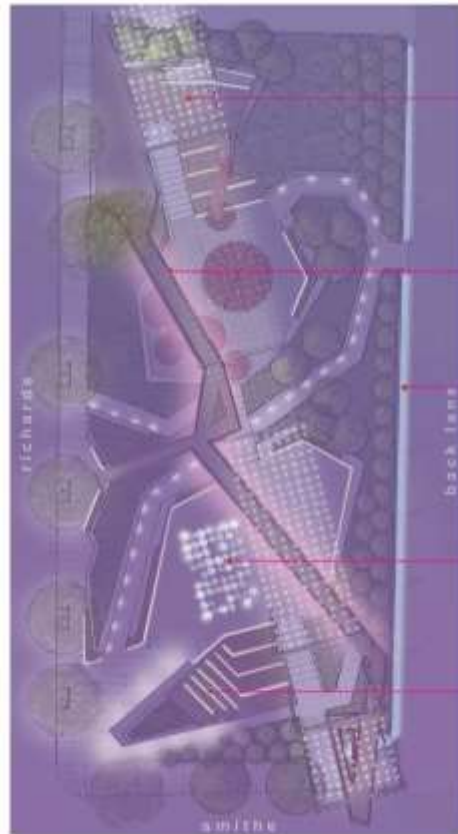
- One or two outdoor ping pong tables could be located in the park to informally engage park users on a daily basis
- Storage for folding tables and table tennis equipment could be integrated into the coffee/food kiosk, enabling organized events or multiple players to participate



## Makers Fairs & Farmers Markets

- The central location of the park and its close proximity to residential buildings also create a prime location for small seasonal enterprises to situate temporary stalls on certain weekends or evenings





#### Overhead Catenary Lights

- Suspended between the Sky Frames, a series of lights on wires (sometimes referred to as catenary lights) would create a festive ceiling to the Park, while also providing an ambient level of light directed downwards into the spaces and activities below.



#### Lighting the Elevated Walkway

- Up-lighting the walkway structure would add a bold, colourful focal point that traverses the entire park space and would offer additional levels of ambient light onto the lower level park spaces.



#### Back Lane Lighting

- The biofiltration channel could also accommodate integrated lights, providing a level of lighting to run the length of the lane way.



#### Water Feature Lights

- Although the water feature would only be activated during specific times and seasons, incorporating feature lighting into these jets would add an additional focal point in the lower park terrain.



#### Seating and Edges

- Incorporating lights into the underside of benches and seating structures is an effective way to provide low levels of light in focused areas.

- Detailed design and cost analysis (Preliminary budget \$6M)
- RFP for potential commercial partner for park building
- Budgeting (City and Park Board 2017 Annual Budget process)
- Tendering and Construction Award (early 2017)
- Operating budget review and explore recreation and downtown partner programming opportunities (2017-18)
- Park Opening target 2018



THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the final design plan for the new downtown park located at Smithe and Richards Streets as illustrated and described in this report.

# Final Design



