

Date: January 12, 2005



TO: Board Members – Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Oak Street and 37th Avenue Park Site – Proposed Design and Public Facilitation Process

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. That the design and public facilitation process for the Oak Street and 37th Avenue park site described in this report be approved; and*
- B. That the required funding be provided by the Conseil Scolaire Francophone and the Vancouver Ultimate League.*

BACKGROUND

The City bought the 11.23 ha (27.75 acre) Shaugnessy Golf Course, located between 33rd and 37th Avenues and Oak and Willow Streets, in 1961 for school and park use. Eric Hamber Secondary School was built on the northerly portion. The southerly 4.76 ha (11.75 acres) were designated a park site which has remained largely in an unimproved, naturalizing state since it was purchased.



DISCUSSION

The Conseil Scolaire Francophone and the Vancouver Ultimate League would like to develop, in a partnership arrangement with the Park Board, recreational facilities on the park site at Oak Street and 37th Avenue.

The Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF) is a public school district established under the School Act and mandated to provide francophone education to students entitled to minority language education under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In 2001, the Provincial Government approved capital funding to enable the CSF to acquire the property across from the park site on the south-east corner of 37th Avenue and Willow Street to build a francophone secondary school. In 2003, the Province approved capital funding for construction of the secondary school.

The CSF school site is not large enough to accommodate a full size secondary playfield so the CSF wishes to enter into a partnership arrangement with the Park Board for use of a portion of the park site. Under the suggested arrangement, the CSF would fund the capital costs of developing a playfield and a perimeter running trail on the park site and would have the right to use them during daytime hours on school days.

The Vancouver Ultimate League (VUL) is also interested in developing four ultimate fields on the site to support league play. Four ultimate fields would cover an area of roughly two regular playing fields.

Since the park site was purchased in 1961, very little park development has occurred. At the moment, the park site features a loosely clustered woodland and meadow character, used by the community for dog walking and BMXing. People have expressed concerns over damage by biking activities, perceived antisocial behaviours, invasive species, fire and security, and tree retention, but also an appreciation for its casual natural character.

In light of these various interests and concerns, staff were directed at the October 5, 2004 Planning and Environment Committee to design a public consultation process for the development of park land on this site and to explore partnership options with the CSF and the VUL. The Park Board does not have resources to conduct this work. The CSF, however, requires an early indication of their proposal's feasibility and the VUL is anxious to find an appropriate ultimate venue. Therefore, it is recommended that the funding required for the consultancy be provided by the CSF and the VUL. The consultancy would begin upon securing the required funds and no obligation of support is implied in allowing the study to be funded by these groups. The cost is anticipated to be between \$18,000 and \$25,000.

The process would include the consultants facilitating a public meeting to seek the views of the community and interested groups of stakeholders on potential facilities and design ideas for the park site; developing conceptual park designs that incorporate those ideas and integrate the program requirements of the CSF and the VUL to the extent possible; facilitating a second public meeting to test those options; and generating a preferred option for consideration of the Board.

This report was discussed by the Planning and Environment Committee on January 11, 2005 and referred to the Board for consideration.

SUMMARY

It is recommended that the Board approve the design and public facilitation process for the Oak Street and 37th Avenue park site described in this report and that the consultancy be funded by the Conseil Scolaire Francophone and the Vancouver Ultimate League.

Prepared by:
Planning and Operations
Board of Parks & Recreation
Vancouver, B.C.
ASD