



Date: June 23, 2005

**TO:** Board Members - Parks and Recreation  
**FROM:** General Manager - Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Pandora Park and Playground Upgrade

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board approve the concept plan for the proposed upgrade of Pandora Park and Playground as described in this report and illustrated in Appendix 1.*

## POLICY

The Board approves new park designs.

## BACKGROUND

Pandora Park is a 1.7 hectare (4 acre) neighbourhood park bounded by Templeton Drive, Nanaimo, Pandora and Franklin Streets. Retaining walls (varying in height from 3 to 10 feet) elevate the west end of the park above the surrounding sidewalk along Templeton and Pandora Streets. The current park features include a number of mature trees; two children's play areas; fieldhouse; wading pool; four tennis courts; basketball and hard surface play area; and two expansive lawn areas.

Currently the park is physically divided into four distinct activity areas - the west lawn, tennis courts, central core and eastern portion. The west end of the park includes an expanse of lawn dotted with mature trees and is used primarily as a dog walking area, short-cut through the park to Hastings Street, and a seating area. The adjacent tennis courts run the width of the park and form a physical barrier between the west lawn and the eastern portion. The central core of the park (immediately east of the tennis courts) was formerly Garden Drive and continues to be well used as a pedestrian connection between the neighbourhood to the north of the park and the shops, services and buses on Hastings Street to the south. A significant grade change, marked by a retaining wall and fencing between the central core and the eastern portion of the park, creates an additional physical barrier to east west movement.

In June 2001 a community group, The Wall Street Healthy Community Project, engaged UBC's School of Landscape Architecture students to develop a number of conceptual plans based on a community consultation process which included interviews and a survey completed by 350 park users; major concerns and desires for improvements to the park were identified through this process.

The Wall Street Healthy Community Project submitted a 2003-2005 Capital Plan Project Proposal in January 2002 highlighting the community's desire to address safety issues, make the park more useable, create new leisure opportunities and improve the overall appearance of the park. Funding for improvements to Pandora Park, including playground relocation and replacement, is \$210,000.

## **DISCUSSION**

In April 2005 the landscape architecture consulting firm, Space2place, was hired to work with Park Board staff, area residents, and the Hastings North Community Policing Centre to develop a master plan for future consideration as well as a concept plan for park and playground improvements within the existing construction budget of \$180,000.

The community participated in the development of the recommended concept plan through an open house, four Pandora Park Steering Committee meetings, and a discussion at the Board's Planning and Environment Committee meeting of June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Through this process, as well as earlier work done by The Wall Street Healthy Community Project, it was determined that the focus of the park improvements should be in the central core of the park. The recommended concept plan includes: relocating the playground to accommodate all ages within close proximity; a central pathway through the park connecting the north and south ends of Garden Drive; improved drainage; unifying sections of the park by re-grading and removing existing fencing and walls where possible; additional picnic tables and seating areas; reducing the existing hard surface areas; and increasing the amount of greenspace (see attached Appendix 1).

The concept plan has also been reviewed by the City's CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) Coordinator. During the next phase of the project, design development, the possibility of including lighting along the north-south central pathway will be reviewed in light of the available funding.

Throughout the park plan development process interest in improving a number of other areas in the park were expressed by the community. These additional items will be recorded on the park master plan and include: additional pathways in the west lawn and central core; visual and physical improvements to the stairs located at the north-west corner of the park; a pathway between the middle of the central core and the west lawn; a change of use of one or two of the existing tennis courts to a youth sports court and skate spot; resurfacing the tennis courts; upgrading the wading pool; and replacement of sections of the perimeter fence. Resurfacing of tennis courts, replacement of the perimeter fence, and stair improvements will be considered in priority setting for these

areas within existing Major Maintenance budgets. The other items can be considered for possible funding in future neighbourhood park planning reviews.

## **SUMMARY**

The proposed concept plan for Pandora Park addresses the community's desire to increase the opportunities for the use and enjoyment of the park by area residents. The improvements are concentrated in the central core of the park and include replacement and relocation of the playground; a pathway in the central core; additional picnic and seating areas; retention of all mature park trees; and increased visual and physical connection between the central core and the eastern portion of the park; a reduction of hard surface area; and an increase in the amount of trees, flowering shrubs, and greenspace.

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