

Date: October 6, 2006



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Trillium Park Site Development

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve a consultation and design process for the development of the Trillium park site, as described in this report.

POLICY

The Board seeks community input on park development projects.

BACKGROUND

The Trillium park site is a three hectare (approximately 7.5 acre) property located on the False Creek flats between Malkin Avenue and National Avenue, immediately west of the new National Works Yard for the City of Vancouver.

The majority of the site is on fill, being a portion of the land reclaimed from False Creek in the period 1913-1919 mainly for the purpose of a railways terminus, and which has been designated for various industrial purposes since it was created. A portion of the historical shoreline of False Creek is believed to run through the park site, near its northern edge.

Between the Trillium park site and Station Street to the east is a large vacant property zoned I-3 – hi-tech industrial, which has been optioned by Providence Health Care for the development of a new hospital and associated medical facilities. It is not at this point certain that all necessary approvals will be secured for this proposed development to proceed.

A chronology of key planning milestones pertaining to the Trillium park site and site selection for synthetic turf playing fields is provided in Appendix A, and the progression of events is summarized in the remainder of this section.

In 1993, the Trillium Park site was secured by Park Board through

- dedication of park land from subdivision of a large industrial property (as required by subdivision by-law), supplemented by
- purchase of land from payments made to the City in lieu of park provision at the Bosa CityGate development site.

The size and configuration of the land assembly was made in order to accommodate two regulation playing fields, with explicit recognition of the active sport needs of a growing population in the downtown core. The industrial context was also seen as an ideal setting for high intensity use evenings and weekends, when business activity in the area would be at its lowest level.

Upon approving the acquisition, both Council and Park Board directed staff to consult with the community, with specific reference made to the Strathcona neighbourhood, regarding the use and design of the park.

Most local residents participating in the consultations did not support the proposed development of fields at the Trillium site location. Instead, residents asked for, and Park Board approved, a community-based programming study for all Strathcona area parks. The study was conducted by the APRA group, and resulted in the development a document known as the APRA Plan. This plan presented a redesign of Strathcona Park involving the removal of two of four playing fields, proposed to be rebuilt on the Trillium site.

The APRA plan was not formally approved by Park Board, but Strathcona Park was subsequently redeveloped very much in the manner proposed. The two fields taken out of Strathcona were not rebuilt at Trillium or elsewhere.

The 2003 – 2005 Parks Capital Plan included a line item for two synthetic turf fields, the first step in increasing the City's playing field inventory in accordance with the 2002 joint Park Board/School Board Playing Field Renewal Plan. These fields were proposed to be developed on the Trillium site.

In 2003, Park Board directed staff to broaden the search for prospective synthetic turf locations. A public process to develop a list of sites and selection criteria was followed by assessment of 58 candidate locations. In 2004, Park Board approved a shortlist of five candidate sites (all near or on secondary school grounds) for more in-depth evaluation and local area consultation. In November 2004, Park Board approved a synthetic turf installation at Kerrisdale Park/Point Grey Secondary, which officially opened in June of 2006. In September 2006, the Board approved a design consultancy for the second field, to be built at Vancouver Technical Secondary School. Of the three remaining sites on the shortlist, two were found to be unsuitable for a synthetic turf project and one remains a feasible site.

The 2006 – 2008 allocates funding for a third synthetic turf field. At its meeting of September 19, 2006, the Park Board Planning Committee directed staff to Staff to prepare a report for the Trillium site development and public consultation process.

DISCUSSION

Outlined in this section is a public process intended to enable park development at Trillium to proceed, either (1) to serve the sport and active recreation needs of existing and emerging residential areas around the False Creek basin, including the downtown, Fairview Slopes, Mount Pleasant, Grandview Woodlands and Strathcona, or (2) according to the expressed preferences of residents of the immediately local area.

Realization of a park on the Trillium site has been stalled for 13 years, due to a lack of consensus as to the appropriate form of development. Past public process has identified two opposing interests advocating two very different and, for the most part, mutually exclusive scenarios for what the park site should become.

During the process of site acquisition, in the subsequent APRA plan development and, most recently, in the determination of appropriate sites for synthetic turf installations, Strathcona residents have consistently stated their opposition to playing fields in Trillium, even as a trade-off for the fields removed from Strathcona Park. Rather, local residents and other groups (such as the Environmental Youth Alliance), have advocated for a passive park, “sanctuary” type development of the Trillium site, with green linkages east-west to False Creek and to the Grandview Cut.

The field sports community and others want Park Board to follow through with the APRA plan at the Trillium site, pointing to the value of a centrally-located double field site and expressing concern over the loss of two playing fields from the city-wide inventory as a result of implementing the APRA plan at Strathcona Park.

There are essentially two park development scenarios which could emerge in the process of planning and designing Trillium park site:

Scenario A: Trillium as sport and active recreation park

Rationale: This direction is consistent with the original reason that the site was acquired and configured as an enclave within an industrial zone, and also adheres to the recommendation of the APRA plan.

The neighbourhoods around the False Creek basin have the highest population growth and the lowest per capita sport field provision in Vancouver [Map Appendix D]. Other than the single field planned for South East False Creek, there are no other identified options for increasing playing field capacity in this area, either through the development of new sites or conversion of existing fields to synthetic turf. No other sites in the City feasible for the development of a double synthetic turf field were identified in the recent synthetic turf planning process.

Scenario B: Trillium as a mainly passive neighbourhood park

Rationale: This direction adopts the expressed preferences advanced through all local neighbourhood-based consultations since the Trillium park site was acquired.

While Strathcona is not, numerically speaking, a “park deficient” neighbourhood [Map Appendix E], it is an inner city neighbourhood, with special circumstances to consider with respect to open space needs. Private open space is relatively limited, and typical lot frontage for single family homes is 25 feet. Opportunities to walk or run in attractive and safe surroundings are constrained, and there is no easy passage to the sea walk system a short distance to the west.

Furthermore, Strathcona is a low income and high social need neighbourhood. Average family income is just over half that of the City as a whole. Many residents rely on public transportation rather than a personal vehicle. Therefore, it is difficult for many families in Strathcona to access major parks like Stanley and Queen Elizabeth, or the beaches, or to travel to natural areas outside of the city

Consultation and Design Process

The consultation process outlined here does not favour either of the above development scenarios. It is intended to clarify how the park might be used, by whom, and with what ensuing benefits and trade-offs. The Board should be cautioned that the contending perspectives regarding on the future of the park are not likely to be reconciled into an over-arching consensus through a new round of consultation.

Preparation phase: Work to be done in advance of a public consultation launch includes, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Review and consolidate information from past planning work pertinent to the Trillium site, including original acquisition reports, the APRA study and related minutes, correspondence, etc.
- Compile and update technical information on the site relevant to factors which may support or constrain particular forms of development.
- Identify and canvass stakeholders (including local community associations, recreation and leisure services (Park Board and others), neighbourhood advocacy groups, as well as sport organizations and leagues operating in downtown and east side neighbourhoods) in order to establish their programming focus, their membership base and any barriers they might face with respect to accessing park and open space resources appropriate to their needs.
- Organize the information gathered into graphic presentation formats.
- Establish a ‘Trillium Park development’ page under “Park Planning Projects” on the Park Board public website to post project updates and receive public input.

Consultation launch: Staff would convene a neighbourhood forum open to all, but those groups and individuals who previously participated in the APRA plan development and other consultations on the Trillium site would be specifically invited to attend. The forum would display the information compiled in the preparation phase relevant to park development, and solicit public input.

Concept development: Based the compiled documentation, consultants will prepare one or more design options. Feedback will be sought from stakeholders, and the option(s) will be prepared for broader public review.

Public review of concepts: The options developed as described above will be displayed at an open house and will be posted on the Park Board public website. Responses from the public will be solicited and recorded.

Park Board consideration: The outcome of the public process will be reported back to the Board for a decision on the next steps of park development.

Timing and budget

The consultation process steps outlined above would require about four to six months from initiation, and a design consultancy to develop park concepts is expected to be in the \$25,000 to \$35,000 range.

Implementation of preferred park development

Development of Trillium Park in advance of the 2009-2011 Capital Plan cycle would require Council approval of the release of city-wide Development Cost Levy (DCL) funds for new park development. The order of magnitude cost of park development would be in the range of \$4.5-\$6.5 million, depending upon the type of park and the amenities included. There is allocation of \$1,500,000 in the 2006-2008 Capital Plan for one synthetic turf field, which could cover part of the construction cost if such an element is included in the park program

SUMMARY

This report outlines the history of the Trillium park site, which has been in the Park Board inventory since 1993. Board approval is sought for a proposed concept design and public consultation process to resolve how this park site should be developed.

Prepared by:

Planning and Operations
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC
MV:eml

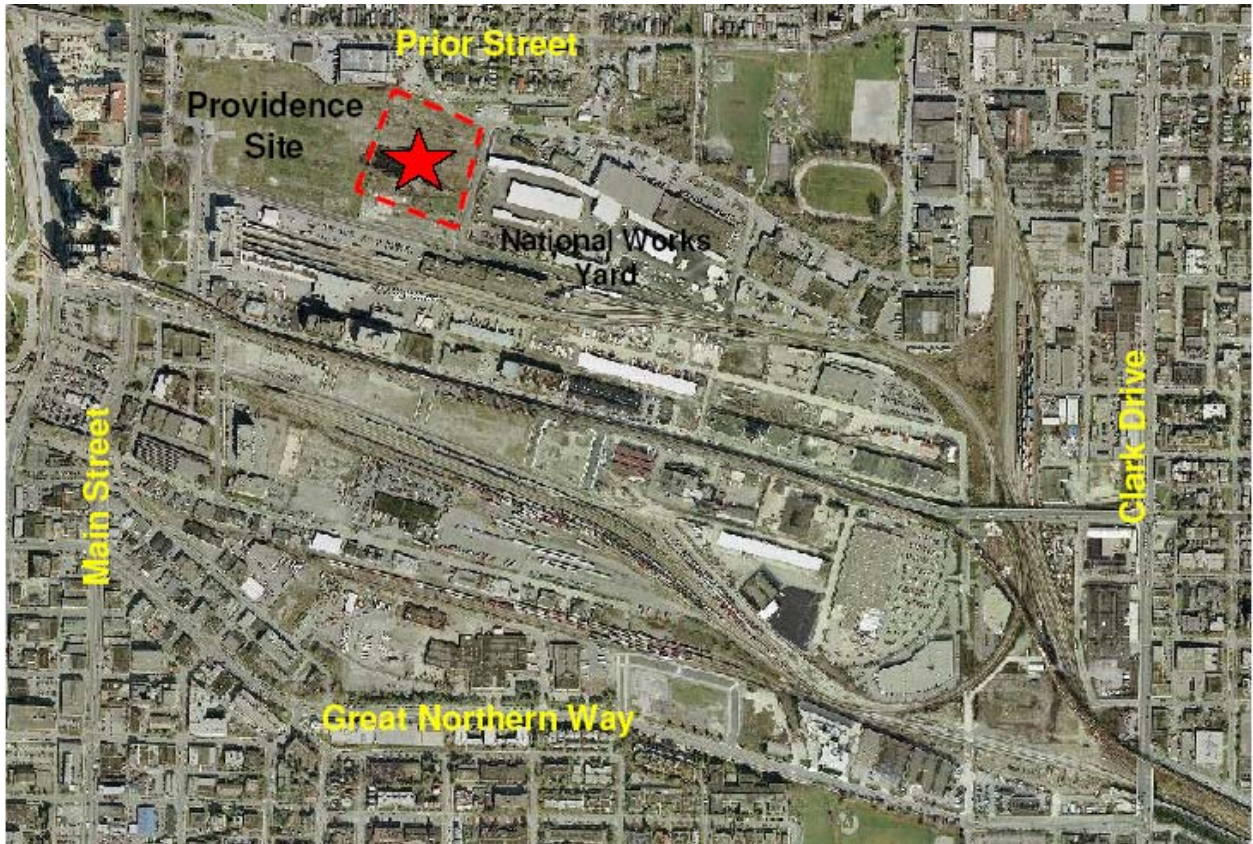
APPENDIX A

Chronology of Trillium Park Site and Synthetic Turf Milestones

Date	Action	Notes
March 1993	<p>Council [In Camera] approves negotiations for purchase of 17 acres of the Trillium/BNR property for city uses, and approves purchase of up to 4 acres to supplement a park dedication of 3.57 acres which is a condition by the subdivision by-law.</p> <p>Council directs staff to enter into discussions with the Strathcona community to discuss options and report back.</p>	<p>[from Council report] "A strategic park purchase now will serve a number of short-term or long-term purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) serves to address the playing field deficit arising out of the densification of the downtown peninsula; b) capitalizes on a unique opportunity to supplement a substantial dedication (3.57 acres) with a purchase (4.0 acres)...; c) provides land for part of a linear connection between Strathcona and False Creek"
Sept 1993	<p>Park Board (In Camera) approves purchase of up to 4 acres of the Trillium/BNR property, to supplement the park dedication resulting from site subdivision, creating a 7.5 acre park site.</p>	<p>[from Board report] "The parcel is of a size and configuration large enough to accommodate two regulation playing fields plus two baseball diamonds. The playing field use is considered to be especially important in light of the population increases in the downtown. The final use and design of the park is subject to further work and community involvement."</p>
April 1994	<p>Staff meet with area residents to discuss potential park development at Trillium</p>	<p>A request made for a study of area parks to see what residents desire for Trillium, Strathcona, Maclean and Maclean Linear Parks.</p>
July 1994	<p>Park Board resolves to undertake a community-based programming study for Strathcona, Maclean and Trillium Parks.</p>	
August 1995	<p>APRA Group engaged to conduct the park study</p>	<p>Study terms of reference are to consider the park needs of Strathcona, as well as stakeholders who do or could use facilities in any of the parks under review.</p>
Feb 1996	<p>APRA Report released, but not voted on by Park Board</p>	<p>Key recommendations of APRA study: Retain existing sport fields on east and west edges of Strathcona Park. Take out 2 fields in the centre of Strathcona to enable the park re-design. Build 2 new soccer fields on the new park. Place sport fields on southern part of Trillium and a multi-purpose playground on the north. Develop a perimeter pathway system for Trillium.</p>
April 2001	<p>Board approves design consultancy for Strathcona Park</p>	

Date	Action	Notes
2002	Board approves concept design and construction tender for Strathcona park based on APRA plan principles, including the temporary loss of two fields from the overall field inventory.	
July 2002	Park Board and School Board approve 'Playing Field Renewal Strategy' including recommendation that joint inventory of playing fields be increased through the development of 6 lit synthetic turf playing fields over the coming decade.	2003-2005 Capital Plan includes funding for first 2 fields. 2006- 2008 Capital Plan has funding for one additional field.
Nov 2002	Parks 2003 - 2005 Capital Plan approved, including provision for 2 synthetic turf fields proposed for installation at the Trillium park site.	
Sept 2003	Park Board approves city-wide planning process to evaluate alternate sites for the synthetic turf fields.	
Nov 2003	City-wide public workshop in the Fall of 2003 develops (1) 'must-have' criteria for choosing viable sites for synthetic turf, and (2) 'evaluation' criteria for making comparisons and establishing preferences amongst sites.	
April 2004	Park Board approves a shortlist of five candidate sites for synthetic turf installation, after an extensive joint Park Board/School Board consultation process, and technical review of 58 potential sites across the city. Trillium not shortlisted, but is listed in the report as one of 20 sites meeting the criteria for synthetic turf development.	2 of the shortlisted sites subsequently determined to be not feasible. 2 are complete/in process. One remains a viable site. The 20 sites identified as meeting the criteria are:
Nov 2004	Park and School Board approve the selection of Kerrisdale Park/Point Grey School as site of first synthetic turf field.	
June 2006	Kerrisdale/Point Grey field officially opens.	
Sept 2006	Van Tech field approved for 2 nd synthetic turf development.	

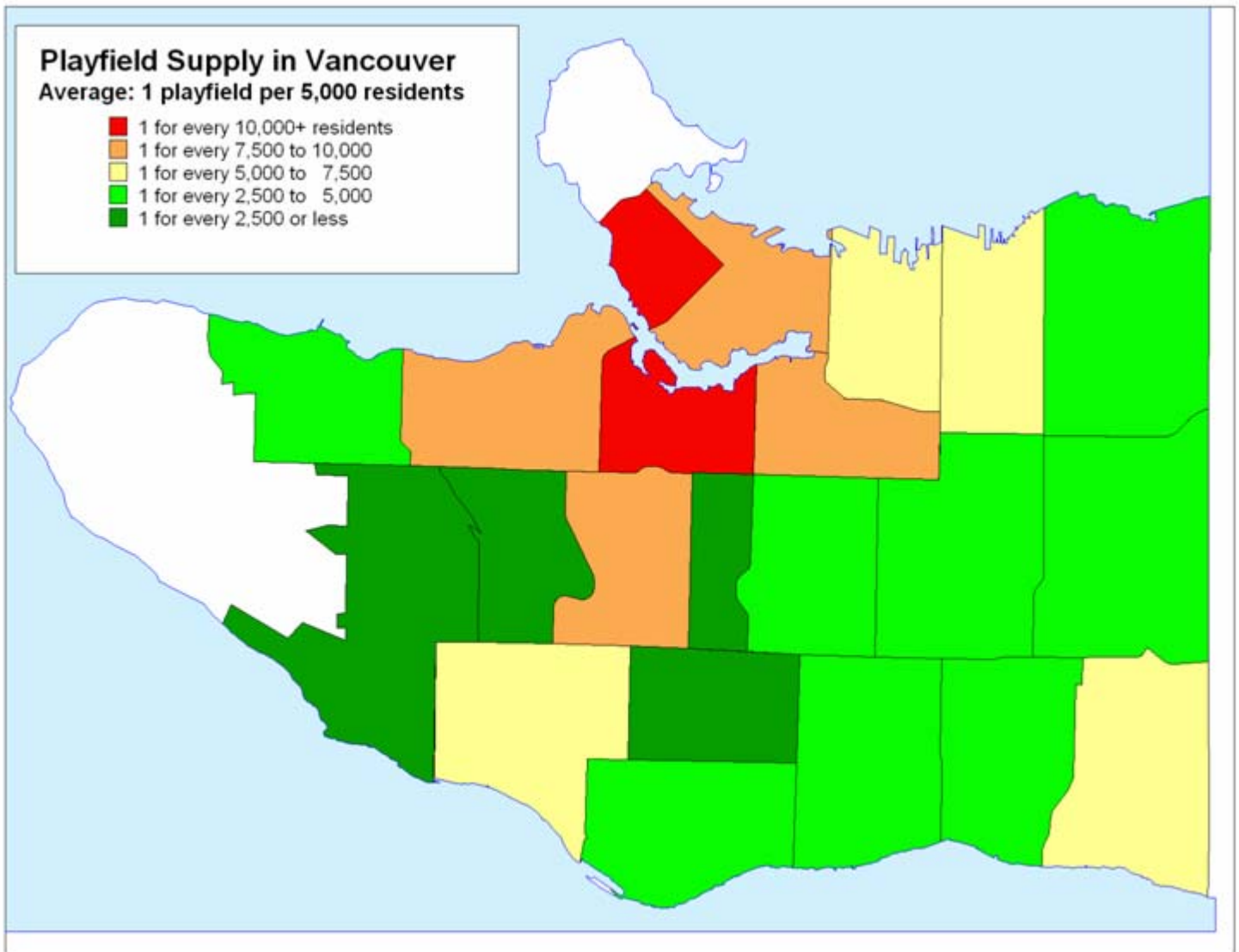
Aerial Context Map of Trillium Site



Aerial Map Trillium Park Site



Playfield Supply in Vancouver



Ratio of 'Neighbourhood Parks'

