

Date: November 18th, 2011



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: New Park at Main Street and 18th Ave

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve the concept plan for the proposed new mini-park located at the junction of Main Street and 18th Avenue, as described in this report and illustrated in the Appendices.

POLICY

The Board approves the design and development of parks.

BACKGROUND

A new mini-park is located at the northwest corner of Main Street and 18th Avenue as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Site Context

This 0.20 hectare site is a City of Vancouver Engineering right-of-way, located immediately east of a development parcel at 3333 Main Street on which the construction of a 6-story mixed use building will soon be complete. During the planning process for this development by the Bastion Development Corporation, City and Park Board staff

determined that this location is ideal for the creation of an enhanced open space (mini-park) to support the goal of the City's Greenest City Action Plan, of increasing access to green space. The new building, that will sit to the west of the park, will include residential units on the upper floors and 2 retail units on the ground floor.

The site was previously an automobile dealership and was the home of the Palm Dairy during the 1960's. Another unique feature of this site is that it was formerly flanked on the west side by a traffic slip-lane. The rezoning process resulted in regularizing the intersection of Main Street and 18th Avenue. Removal of the slip-lane creates a larger integrated open space in front of the new building. The new mini-park proposed at this location is integral to the City's park system: not only relating to nearby Grimmert Park, but also serving as a key linkage between the Mount Pleasant community to the north and the Riley Park community to the south. This site is also the location of a proposed public art installation to be incorporated in the mini-park.

In May of 2011, The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation hired Hapa Collaborative as the primary landscape architects to lead the design process for the new mini-park. Hapa have worked in conjunction with the Park Board Planning and Operations staff, and the City of Vancouver's Engineering and Community Services Departments to ensure a well co-ordinated design. Furthermore, Hapa and the Park Board have hosted stakeholder events and 3 public open house events since June of 2011 to glean the insights that informed the design concept.

Upon the Board's approval of the concept plan, Hapa Collaborative will, under the direction of Park Board staff, proceed to design development and produce all working drawings and related contract documentation in order for the project to be tendered for construction. It is anticipated that construction will commence in the spring of 2012 and be completed in the summer of 2012.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the community engagement to date, related to this project, and for the Board to approve the final concept plan as illustrated in Appendix A. The total estimated budget for the project is \$590,000. Funding for this project is available through a Community Amenity Contribution from the developer, and the City-wide DCL new park development fund.

DISCUSSION

Prior to 3 public open houses, multiple stakeholder meetings were held to discuss the initial ideas and vision for this mini-park. The stakeholder meetings indicated high-level priorities for the design ideas presented at the first open house. Park Board staff have been leading the design process for the site, whereas the City's Public Art group is leading the process for the public art installation.

After the stakeholder events were conducted, 3 public open houses were hosted to glean public opinions. The notification process for each public open house involved advertising the events with posters throughout the neighbourhood proximate to the mini-park,

advertising in the Vancouver Courier, and via email lists. Feedback was sourced through web surveys following each open house.

The first open house event was held on July 19th, 2011 at Grimmert Park. The display material focused on design precedents and program elements to give participants an opportunity to express their preferences for a design direction. The outcome of this event, which was attended by approximately 50 individuals, revealed that the design for the mini-park should prioritize social gathering, seating, respite from the traffic on Main Street, green space, public art, incorporating historical context (especially the Palm dairy), a gateway to mid-Main, interactive elements, memorable experience, and expression of the community. These outcomes informed the creation of 3 concepts that were presented at the second open house.

This second open house event was hosted on September 17, 2011 at a booth at the Autumn Shift Festival. The booth received well over 100 visitors over the course of the 6 hour event. Hapa Collaborative prepared 3 concepts and valuable feedback was received on all of the options presented. The result of the feedback suggested that concept option #2 was favored the most and concept #3 the least. The specific ingredients that were favored included the use of slight mounding to create a sense of separation from the street, the incorporation of moveable tables and chairs, a unique and memorable overhead trellis, sustainable green technologies such as permeable pavers and large soil volumes, organic naturalized forms, native low maintenance plant species, and food vendors to help animate the space. These ingredients were adopted into the final concept that was presented to the public on November 1st, 2011. Ingredients that were not favoured, and consequently that were not carried forward into the final preferred concept, included hammocks, colourful gradients of high maintenance hydrangea shrubs, large mounds of soil, limited site porosity both visually and accessibility wise, large ground-based painted patterns, and smaller gathering spaces.

The final public open house, held at Slickity Jim's Chat 'n' Chew Café on Main Street, was an opportunity to display the final concept plan and demonstrate the planning process. The final concept plan, attached as Appendix A, is mindful of all the feedback received during the open houses and stakeholder discussions. While the feedback could not always be incorporated directly, it was always considered and weighed against social, ecological, financial, functional, and aesthetic considerations. Of the approximately 40 attendees, the majority of the public responded positively to the final concept plans and supported the Park Board's desire to move forward in preparing construction drawings and construction of the park.

SUMMARY

The final design for the mini-park will create a memorable urban place along the Main Street corridor. With the support of the Park Board, staff will advance the preferred design concept into the next phase of design development and prepare construction drawings in order that the project can be tendered for construction in the spring of 2012 with targeted completion of construction in the summer.

Appendix A – Preferred Design Option

APPENDIX A - 3333 Main Street Concept Plan

In this small park on a busy street, berms and gentle slopes create a soft landscape, provide spatial separation from noisy traffic on Main Street and become spaces for informal use and social exchange. Within these edges are a variety of seating options from seat walls and benches, to café tables, chairs and swivel stools.

The site's history, as the Palm Dairy operations and the place once considered to have "the best milkshakes in the city," serve as inspiration for the building design and park parti. A bubble dot patterning is applied on the groundplane referencing the past use. The interstitial spaces become places for activity and gathering while a bright, straw-like trellis provides shade and enclosure.



Walls also serve as secondary seating



Gentle mounds define park boundaries and create inhabitable spaces



Perennials and grasses soften the site and blur edges



Illustration of Silva Cell tree system protecting tree roots and providing place for water infiltration

hapa
COLLABORATIVE

- 1 Parallel parking
- 2 Planting area
- 3 Poodle sculpture
- 4 swivel stools
- 5 Berm
- 6 bus stop
- 7 Tilted plane lawn
- 8 Seat wall (portions with bench backs)
- 9 Feature tree
- 10 Flexible plaza with pattern
- 11 Food / beverage vendor
- 12 tables and moveable chairs
- 13 Trellis, kiwi vine and promenade space



site plan



Ice cream & milkshakes historically served on site



Palm Dairy Building ca. 1970



Example of ice cream vendor operating on New York City streets



Moveable chairs allow maximum flexibility

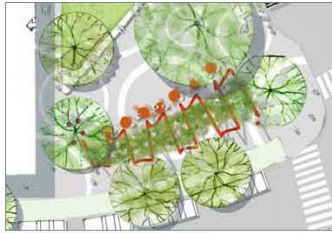


Swivel stools reference former dairy counter



Straw-like trellis creates green promenade space

trellis



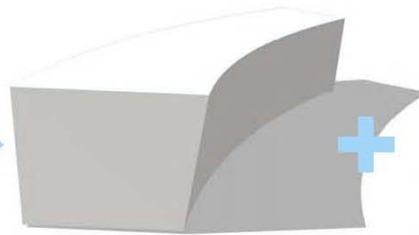
Area of site with trellis shown at right
Scale 1:400



View of trellis with climbing plants in summer



Inspiration: Pioneer Square Pergola, Seattle



Volume of space created inside Pioneer Square Pergola



Volume wrapped in straws, referencing Palm Dairy milk bar



Volume removed, leaving straw trellis