

Date: September 11, 2013



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: New Park at 6th Avenue and Fir Street

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approves the concept plan for the proposed new park design concept located at the junction of 6th Avenue West and Fir Street, as described in this report and illustrated in the Appendices.

POLICY

The Board approves major changes in Vancouver parks including the design and development of parks.

BACKGROUND

The site of the new park under discussion is located at the northwest corner of 6th Avenue and Fir Street as per the context image below:



This 0.13 hectare site is located at the junction of 6th and Fir and flanked on the north edge by CPR right-of-way. The parcel is also directly east of the Pine Street Community Garden. The site was acquired by the City of Vancouver in 2001 with a vision of eventually incorporating this park parcel into a larger park in the Burrard Slopes neighbourhood. This larger park parcel will occupy the entire block framed by Pine and Fir on the west and east and by 5th and 6th on the north and south. The City of Vancouver is still in the process of acquiring the additional parcels within this block to make this

vision possible. In the meantime, this triangular parcel is planned for park development in the short-term to provide access to green space in walking distance for residents, in keeping with the Greenest City Action Plan, Access to Nature and Park Board Strategic Plan Healthy Ecosystem goals.

After the land was acquired it was leased to an automotive business until 2012. Subsequently, the building was demolished and contaminated site issues resolved. The site became ready for park development in the fall of 2012.

In November of 2012, The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation hired Durante Kreuk Ltd. (DK) as the primary landscape architects to lead the design process for the new park at 6th and Fir. DK have worked in conjunction with the Park Board to ensure a design that is mindful of the community stakeholders and the site constraints by hosting three public open house events to glean the insights that inform the design concept.

Upon the Board's approval of the concept plan, DK will, under the direction of Park Development staff and in consultation with operations staff, proceed to produce all working drawings and related contract documentation in order for the project to be tendered for construction. It is anticipated that park construction will commence in the winter of 2014 and be completed by summer of 2014.

The purpose of this report is for the Board to approve the preferred concept plan (refer to the Appendix for a view of the plan).

DISCUSSION

The three public open houses for 6th and Fir were held at La Maison de la Francophonie de Vancouver (1555 W 7th Ave, Vancouver, BC). Each public open house was held as a drop-in style event between the hours of 4 p.m and 8 p.m. The events were advertised in multiple forums including posters on the fences surrounding the site, flyers distributed throughout the neighbourhood proximate to the park (2-block radius), advertising in the Courier, the City of Vancouver Park Board website, and sending out an email invite to all public stakeholders on the project contact list (this list was updated after each open house with additional email addresses as provided by attendees). Participants of the open house events were provided with a survey to fill out in person or online via Fluid-Survey. The imagery from each open house was also placed on the Park Board project page with a link to the surveys that were typically open for 2-weeks following the each open house.

The first public open house event was hosted on February 13th, 2013. The Park Board and DK presented a "grab-bag" of precedent park images to inspire the community and glean public opinions of favourable directions for the conceptual design process. The Park Board obtained a well-represented opinion of the community as 100 surveys were completed, 49 of which were in person and 51 online. This informed the directions of three concepts that were presented at the second open house held on April 10th, 2013 in which a total of 356 surveys were completed, 61 in person and 295 online. Worth mention is that many skateboard enthusiasts attended the second open house to support a "skateboard nook" at this location. Upon further examination of proposed future residential land uses adjacent to the park, skateboard park location criteria cited in the

Vancouver Park Board Skateboard Strategy, and the input received from many open house participants, skateboarding cannot be located in this small park site. Staff will continue to seek for a location for a west side skateboard spot to serve the growing needs in the Kitsilano neighbourhood.

The final proposed design was presented at the final of three open houses on June 11th, 2013. This open house was well attended and 133 respondents participated in the survey, with 65 in person and 68 online. The final results indicated that there is 86% approval of the final park design, with only 14% not fully supporting the design.

Since the commencement of this project there has been extensive stakeholder and public involvement. This involvement, coupled with DK's progressive design approach and commitment to ensure the design of the future park is inherently linked to the Park Board's Strategic Framework, has led to the creation of a park design that will be successful by all measures.

The design incorporates the three facets of sustainability (social, ecological, and economic) and should stand the test of time and serve as an invaluable community amenity into the future. The following points summarize the aspects of the design that are mindful of the Park Board's Strategic Framework:

- Parks and Recreation For All: The park design focuses on promoting active living and strives to ensure activities and accessibility for all ages and abilities. Specific elements include a playground, and an education node that focuses on teaching community members about urban food assets where the park interfaces with the Pine Street Community Garden.
- Leader in Greening: The Park includes 33 new trees, 12 new community garden plots including an education garden area, and multiple landscape areas such as grass, wildflower, and shrub beds.
- Excellence in Resource Management: The Park includes a recycled shipping container, 30 salvaged large boulders from a Kerrisdale development site, use of recycled wood, and storm water infiltration areas to minimize the load on municipal storm lines.
- Engaging People: The Park design process reached out to community members through 3 separate open house events and engaged specific groups such as the Pine Street Community Garden, the MPA Community Housing, and representatives from the 7th Ave. Inter and Intra Organization. Relationships have also been forged to ensure the design is supported by City of Vancouver Engineering and CPR.

FUNDING AND SCHEDULE

Through the public open house process the final concept plan, as illustrated in the Appendix, was well received. At this time, and assuming concept approval by the Board, Park Board staff and consultants will advance the design development process and prepare working drawings. The goal is to tender the project in the late Fall so as to begin construction in early winter 2014 with an anticipated opening of the park in summer

2014. The total design and construction budget is approximately \$0.55M, funded by Park Development Cost Levies available in the 2012-2014 Capital Plan.

SUMMARY

The final design concept will serve the needs of the community by meeting Greenest City and Park Board Strategic Goals as described within this report. The design is mindful of the input from the public and will create a memorable park space that can be incorporated into the larger context Burrard Slopes Park. With the support of the Park Board, staff will advance the preferred park design concept and prepare construction drawings so that the project can be tendered for construction early in 2014.

Please refer to the Appendix to review the preferred concept presented at the final open house on June 11th, 2013.

Appendix – Public Open House #3 – Preferred Design Option

**APPENDIX - Public Open House #3 – Preferred Design
June 11th, 2013**

Plan



Birdseye



Legend

- 1 Orchard
- 2 Large Trees
- 3 Open Lawn
- 4 Rain Garden/Stormwater Management
- 5 Natural Planting
- 6 Garden Plots
- 7 Sun Lounger Chairs
- 8 Natural Play
- 9 Trellis Structures
- 10 Garden Support & Storage
- 11 Wood Decking with Train Rails
- 12 Concrete Paving