



March 2, 2018

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Still Creek Community Garden Relocation to Slocan Park

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve relocating the Still Creek Community Garden to Slocan Park, with construction to be funded in full by the City of Vancouver, with all details to the satisfaction of the General Manager; and
- B. THAT the Board grant a five-year licence to the Collingwood Neighbourhood House Society to operate the community garden, with all terms consistent with the Urban Agriculture Policy (2015).

BOARD AUTHORITY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

As per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over park land use in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within designated parks.

Vancouver City Council approved the [Greenest City 2020 Action Plan \(GCAP\)](#) in July 2011. GCAP includes a target to increase local food assets by 50%, by 2020.

In May 2012, the Board endorsed the strategic priorities of “Engaging People” and being “a Leader in Greening”. More specifically, the Board directed staff “to support community based food production by contributing to the development of neighbourhood and city-wide food infrastructure programs and assets”.

This project is aligned with the Park Board’s [Local Food Action Plan](#) (2013), which supports community gardens in parks with specific priorities that include increasing local and sustainable food assets and growing more food on Park Board lands. This policy framework is rooted in the context of the Greenest City Action Plan, [Vancouver Food Strategy](#), the [Park Board Strategic Framework](#), and the [Vancouver Food Charter](#).

All community garden projects on park land are subject to the requirements of the Park Board’s [Urban Agriculture Policy](#) (2015)

BACKGROUND

The Still Creek Community Garden is currently located on a City-owned property at 4410 Kaslo Street. This site has been selected for Temporary Modular Housing (TMH) as part of the commitment by the City and the Province of BC to build 600 units of TMH across the city. 4410 Kaslo would provide 52 units with supportive services for residents while permanent housing is being built. Each building will be managed by a non-profit housing operator selected by BC Housing. If approved, the Kaslo TMH project would begin construction in March 2018 with residents moving into the new units in July 2018.

Still Creek Community Garden was created in 2011 and currently has 45 garden beds, 7 accessible garden beds, 2 beehives, a charity donation garden bed, communal berry and herb beds, and a small seating area. It is approximately 675 square meters in size. The community garden has 40 members, with half of the members living in the neighbourhood and half from other east Vancouver neighbourhoods. As a result of the Kaslo TMH proposal, the gardeners were issued an eviction notice on November 24, 2017, with the requirement to leave the site by March 1, 2018 prior to the initiation of construction activities.

DISCUSSION

Park Board staff, as directed by the Board, have worked with City of Vancouver staff to identify alternate locations for Still Creek Community Garden. Staff conducted an analysis of all city-owned sites, including parks, within 1200 metre (15 minute walk) of the existing garden. Slocan Park, located directly across 29th Avenue from 4410 Kaslo Street, emerged as the preferred location based on technical analysis, the site selection principles developed by Park Board staff and Still Creek Community garden members, and public feedback.

Site Selection Process

An investigation of all City-owned sites within 1200 meters, or roughly a 15 minute walk, of the existing garden site resulted in approximately 42 City-owned sites, including existing parks. Sites that were not currently vacant, already had a community garden, were too small for a garden (less than 600 sq. meters), or were under consideration for other uses, were eliminated from the selection. Seven sites were shortlisted as feasible sites. City and Park Board staff visited each of the sites to identify suitability in terms of adjacency of surrounding land uses and quality of the site for growing conditions. The list was then narrowed to five sites.

The five sites were shown to the community garden committee for discussion (see Appendix A). Staff and the committee developed the following principles for selecting a new site:

- Proximity to existing garden (4410 Kaslo Street) – the relocated garden should be located close by to continue to build a sense of community within the neighbourhood;
- Accessibility – the relocated garden should be inclusive for everyone – all ages and abilities;
- Access to transit – the relocated garden should be easily accessible by all modes of transportation;
- Sunlight – the relocated garden should be in a location that supports successful gardening and food production;
- Safety – the relocated garden should be in a location that always feels safe, from dusk to dawn.

Slocan Park best met the selection criteria and was identified as the preferred location. Staff identified the lawn area in the north-east corner of the park next to the tennis courts as the most appropriate location within the park (see image below). This took into consideration future sports field upgrades and existing programming within the park.

Slocan Park Site Map



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Park Board staff led a community engagement process to gather feedback from surrounding residents and park users about the garden relocation. The following methods were used as part of the public engagement process (see schedule in Table 1):

- An information web-page was created for the project;
- Park Board and City staff held two meetings and one workshop with the Still Creek Community Gardening Committee;
- A public open house was held in Slocan Community Hall;
- A web-survey was hosted on Talk Vancouver in both English and Chinese.
- Notifications were mailed out to all residents within a two-block radius of Slocan Park, and a site-sign was posted at Slocan Park and posters were placed at community centres and neighbourhood houses surrounding the park;
- The open house and survey were also promoted through Park Board social media channels; and
- Given that 25% of the neighbourhood speak Chinese languages at home, posters and surveys were translated and there was a translator present at the open house.

Table 1: Engagement Timeline

Date	Action
November 22, 2017	COV & PB meeting with Still Creek Community Garden Committee - Gardeners were informed of TMH project and upcoming eviction notice
November 24, 2017	90 day notice to community garden to vacate 4410 Kaslo Street issued
December 12, 2017	COV & PB workshop with Still Creek Community Garden Committee - Review of staff analysis of city-owned properties - Developed site selection principles - Slocan Park emerged as preferred option
February 1, 2018	Park Board-led public open house - All residents within 2-block radius were notified - Site-signs, posters and social media used to inform residents - Survey on Talk Vancouver between February 1-12, 2018
February 13, 2018	COV & PB workshop with Still Creek Community Garden Committee - Workshop to advance proposed garden concept

Community Feedback

The Feb 1 open-house held at the Slocan Community Hall in Slocan Park was attended by 50 people, and 72 people completed the survey (hard-copy and web response combined). The survey provided an opportunity for park visitors and nearby residents to share their feedback about the proposed location and potential design considerations. Additionally, four people submitted emails with questions about the garden. See Appendix B for more detailed results.

In summary, 53% of 72 respondents supported locating the garden next to the tennis courts in Slocan Park, 13% were neutral and 35% disagreed (rounded to whole number).

Many of the comments that were supportive of the garden identified that this would create another use in the park and help to make the park more welcoming. Many of the comments that were opposed to relocating the garden emphasized a strong preference for the garden to stay at the existing site and were not supportive of community gardens in general. Several were not supportive of Temporary Modular Housing and, therefore, did not support the garden relocation.

Table 2: Schedule for TMH and Garden Projects Combined

Target Date	Action
mid Nov 2017	CoV early engagement with garden stakeholders
Nov 21, 2017	Park Board staff directed to identify suitable space for garden relocation
Nov 24, 2017	Issue 90 day notice to community garden to vacate Kaslo Street site
Feb 2018	Park Board-led public engagement process on garden relocation
Feb 2018	PB development of preliminary concept & report preparation
Mar 2018	Staff report recommendation to Park Board for consideration
Mar 2018	Decision on TMH Development Permit application expected
Mar 2018	TMH construction begins

Target Date	Action
Mar – Apr 2018	Completion of garden design and tendering (if approved)
May – Jun 2018	Construction of the relocated garden (if approved)
Jul 2018	TMH completes
Jul 2018	Opening of relocated community garden (if approved)

Budget and Construction

Pending Park Board direction, funding for construction of the garden and for relocation of important components from the existing garden to the site in Slocan Park will be provided in full by the City of Vancouver. Park Board staff will produce construction documents consisting of drawings and technical specifications that will then be included in an Invitation to Tender (ITT), through which a contractor will be procured to undertake construction of the garden. The scope of work will include site preparation, relocation of two young existing trees, installation of subsurface drainage, installation of a waterline, planting of fruit-bearing trees, and placement of surface materials such as woodchips or gravel. Elements typical to community gardens such as a storage shed, hosebib(s), accessible garden beds, potting table(s), composting facilities, benches, and limited fencing will also be installed. If approved, it is anticipated that the garden will be constructed in the spring and be ready for gardening this summer.

Next Steps

Subject to Board approval of the garden proposal, the next steps would be:

1. Produce final design that meets Park Board requirements;
2. Submit final design to General Manager for review and approval;
3. Enter into licence agreement;
4. Garden construction can begin.

Licence Agreement

All community gardens in parks are managed through a formal licence agreement between the garden society (or supportive partner organization) and the Park Board. If approved, the licence agreement will follow the structure and intent of the existing Park Board licence agreements for community gardens in parks. It will be for a period of 5 years. All new agreements for community gardens in parks will include more detail about requirements to maintain a clean and safe site in order to address concerns about storage of old materials and removal of plastic debris and other unsightly or unsafe materials.

SUMMARY

The proposal for a new community garden at Slocan Park is in keeping with the policy objectives of the Park Board's Local Food Action Plan and Urban Agriculture policy. The garden will enliven a currently un-programmed corner of Slocan Park and will increase neighbourhood access to local food assets.

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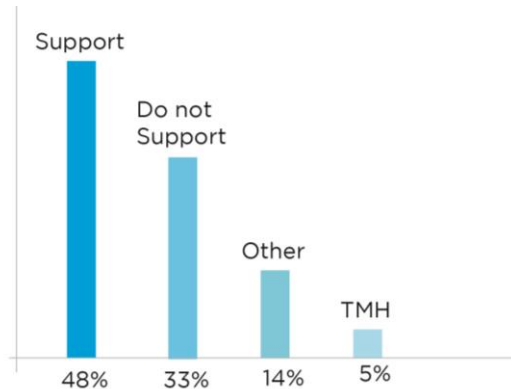
Possible Garden Relocation Sites



Community Engagement Feedback

A survey was used as a tool to help identify level of support for relocation of the garden. A series of questions were asked about the location, preference for other locations, size of garden, and types of amenities that could be included if the garden was to be relocated. The results were coded and thematically grouped based on support, non-support, and the similarity of comments expressed.

The graph below illustrates the diversity of responses when asked: “What do you see as the benefits of relocating the garden to Slocan Park?” and “do you have any concerns?”; 65 people responded.



Comments categorized as supporting the relocation of the garden expressed their reason for support as:

- Activation – the garden provides a use and a new activity in an underused park (9 comments)
- Access – the garden will be very easy to access and have more of a public presence (5 comments)
- General support –the garden will provide a benefit to the park (8 comments)

Comments categorized as not supporting the relocation of the garden expressed their reason for non-support as:

- The garden will take away park space (13 comments)
- A general dislike of gardens or that they don't feel there will be any benefit to the park by relocating the garden (8 comments).

Comments categorized as other include:

- Concerns about the location in terms of sun access, swampy conditions or public safety; these comments did not indicate whether they support the garden if their concerns were addressed.

Comments categorized as TMH do not mention the garden but instead express their dissatisfaction with TMH.

When asked if there were other locations that would be preferred for the garden, 62% supported the proposed location, 27% suggested a different location, 10% commented that the garden should stay where it is, and the remaining 1% did not support gardens in general. 58 people provided comments.

Of the 27% that suggested an alternate location, the most frequent response was Cariboo Park located at 29th Avenue and Skeena. Staff did not consider this location because it was located just outside the 1200m study area