



BC HYDRO REQUEST FOR RIGHTS-OF-WAY IN NELSON PARK

Impacts & Engagement Results

Regular Board Meeting
Monday, May 25, 2020



Purpose of the Presentation

The purpose of today's presentation is to provide an update on BC Hydro's request to for ROW's in Nelson Park



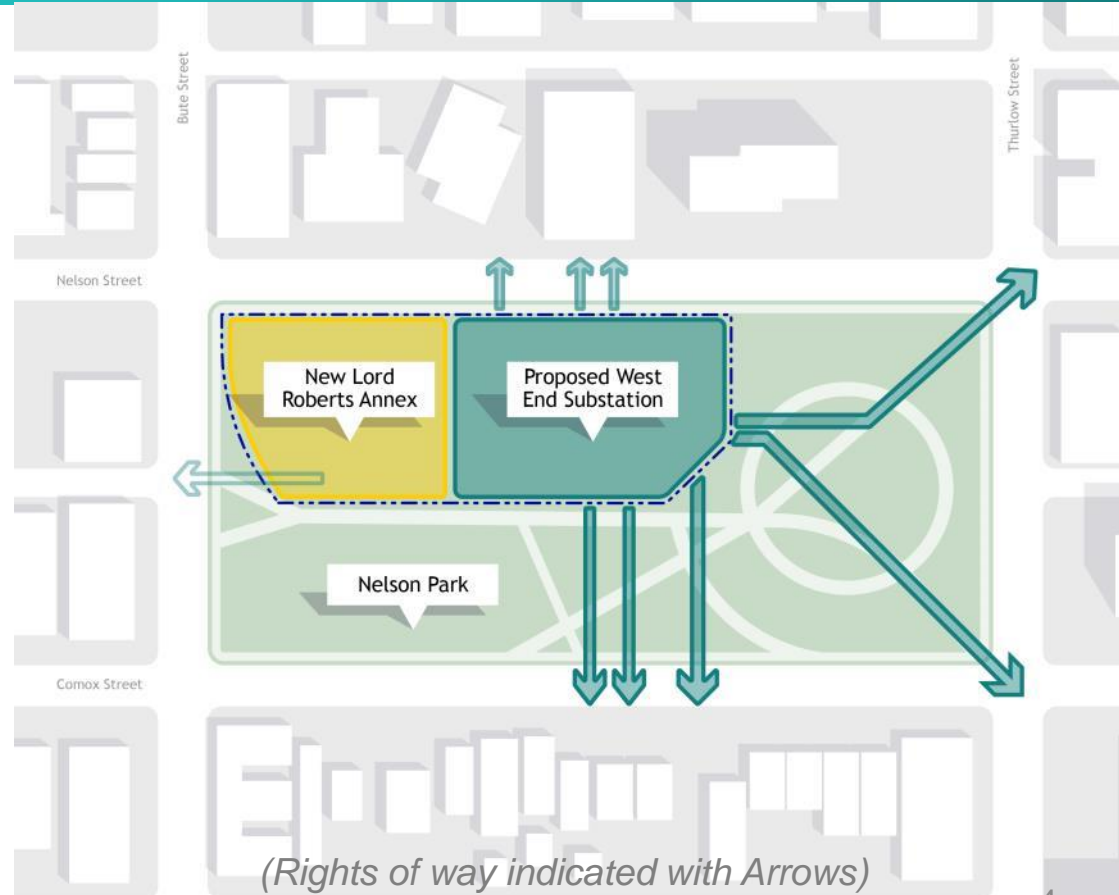
“At its public board meeting on June 25, 2018, trustees of the Vancouver School Board approved moving forward with a deal to sell BC Hydro a subsurface parcel beneath the Lord Roberts Annex site in the West End for development of an underground substation”

Source: Vancouver School Board Website

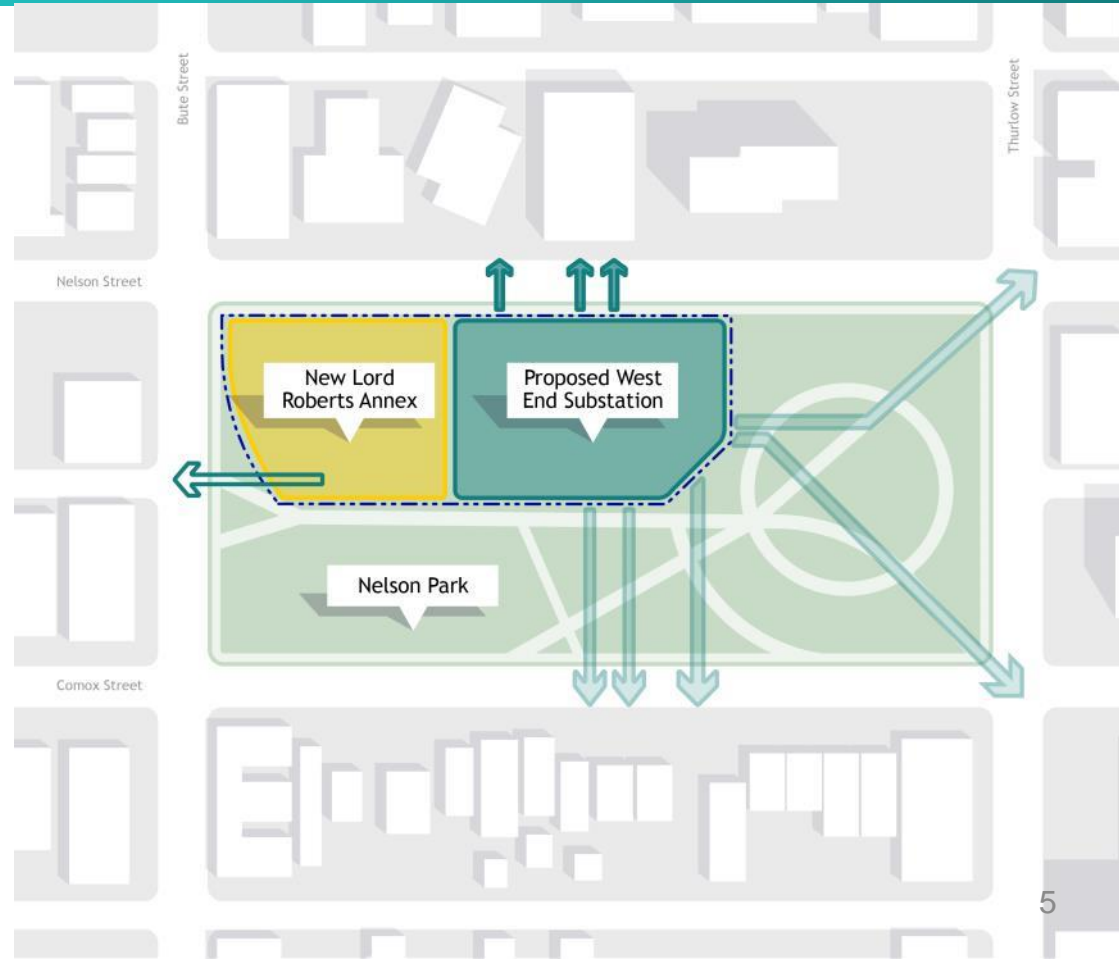


Nelson Park Rights-of-Way

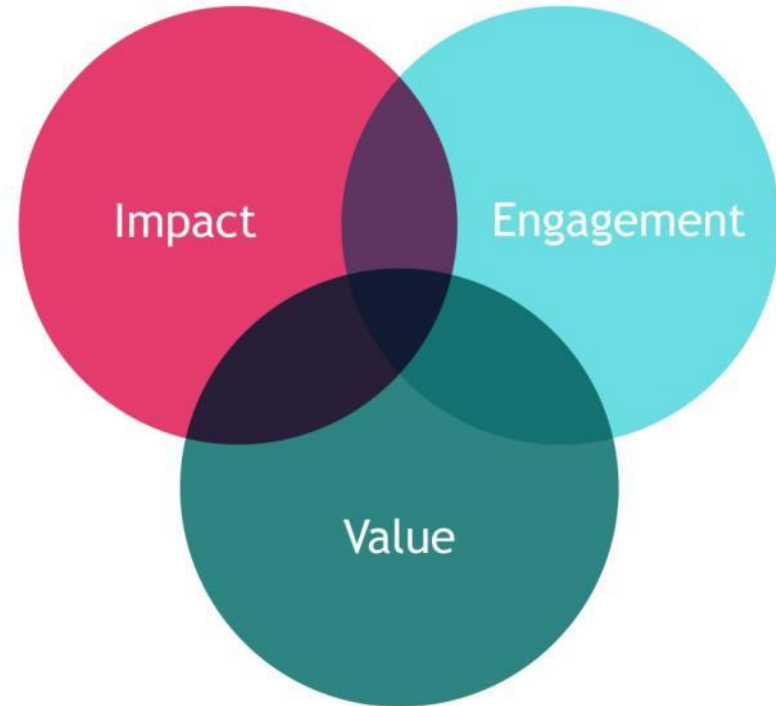
- BC Hydro is requesting rights-of-way for distribution and transmission cables through Nelson Park



- BC Hydro is also requesting an easement for access to the school site and substation, via Bute Street.



In March 2019, Park Board Commissioners asked staff to provide information on three key items to inform their decision on whether or not to accept BC Hydro's proposal for rights-of-way





Part I - Context

- Provide background information on BC Hydro's proposal to the Park Board for Rights-of-way in Nelson Park
- Provide information on neighbourhood context in relation to the VanPlay equity zones



Part II - Engagement

Provide details about the engagement process to get public feedback on the rights-of-way request from BC Hydro



Part III – Impact Study

Provide information on the report that identifies the impacts of BC Hydro's proposal on the park as well as mitigation opportunities.



Part IV – Next Steps

Outline the next steps for the project to determine project development

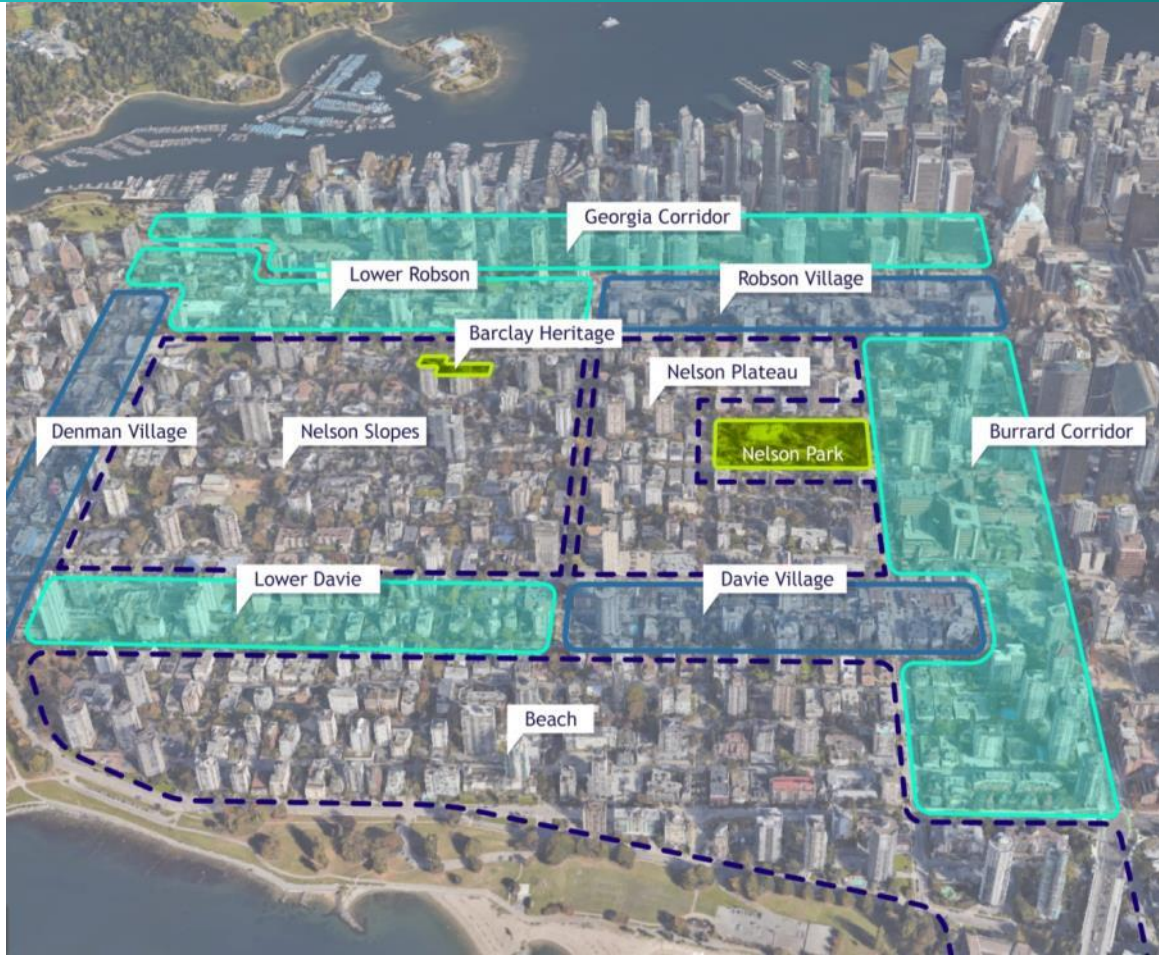


Part I – Project Background





West End Neighbourhood Growth

- West End is home to 45,000 people (2013)
- Expected to grow by 30,000 people over the next 30 years



West End Neighbourhood Growth

-  **Parks**
-  **Corridors**
Increased density and heights to encourage housing growth
-  **Villages**
2-4 storey commercial buildings with parking, pedestrian & transit connectivity
-  **Neighbourhoods**
Maintain existing building heights, incorporate laneway infill housing



West End Neighborhood Growth



Source: CBRE



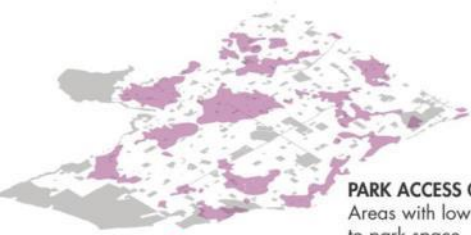
- Several major developments are proposed or underway near Nelson Park
- Approximately 5,150+ units (excl. 6.6 acre St. Paul's Site)
- Significant increase in park space demand for residents

West End Neighborhood Growth

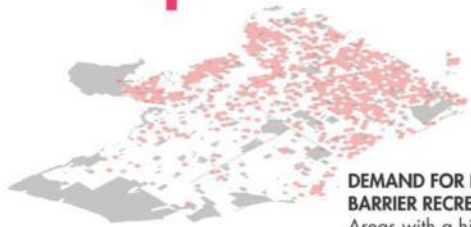


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VanPlay Equity Initiative Zones



PARK ACCESS GAPS
Areas with low access to park space



DEMAND FOR LOW-BARRIER RECREATION
Areas with a higher demand for low-barrier recreation services



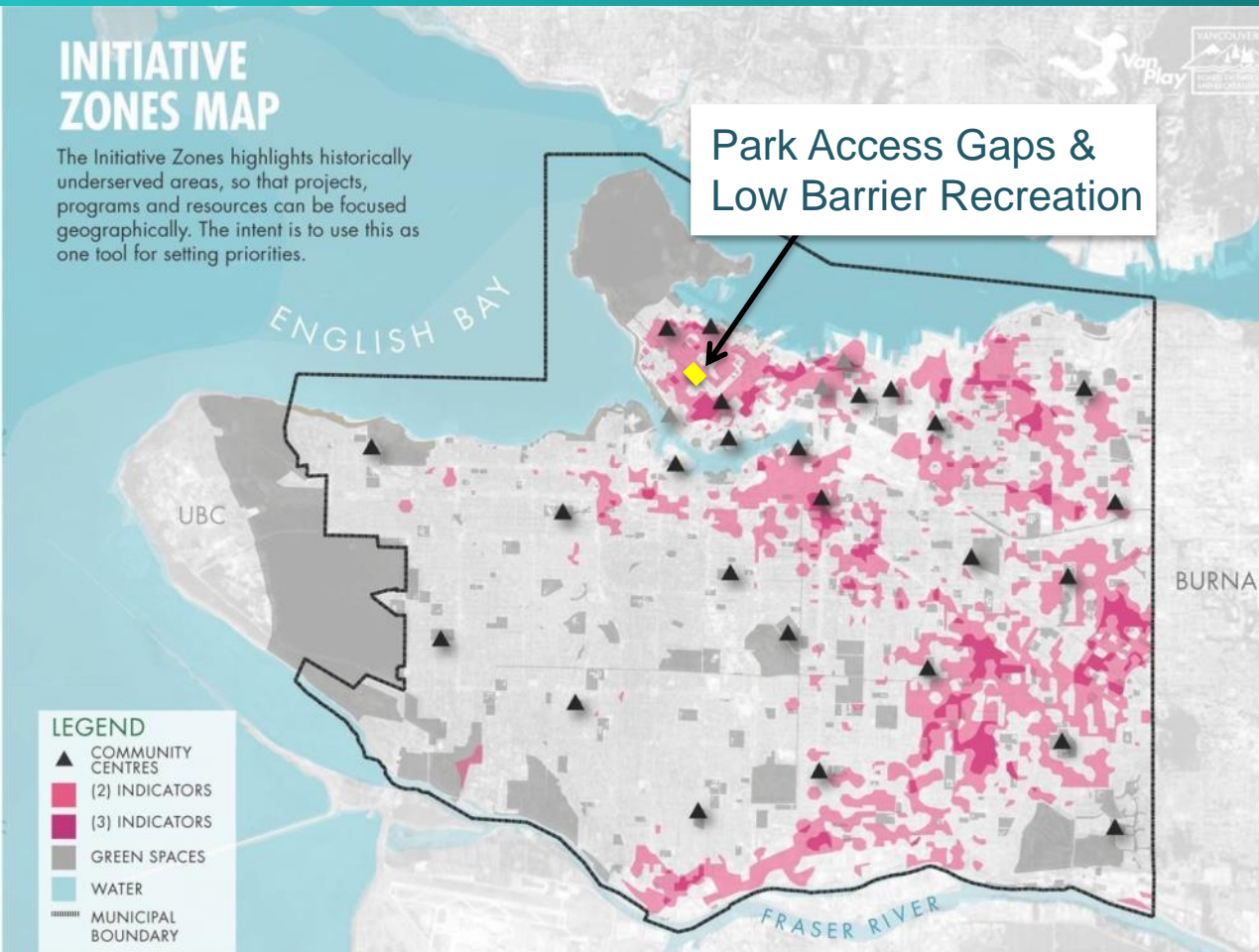
URBAN FOREST CANOPY GAPS
Areas of the city with a less robust urban forest

Source: VanPlay 2018

INITIATIVE ZONES MAP

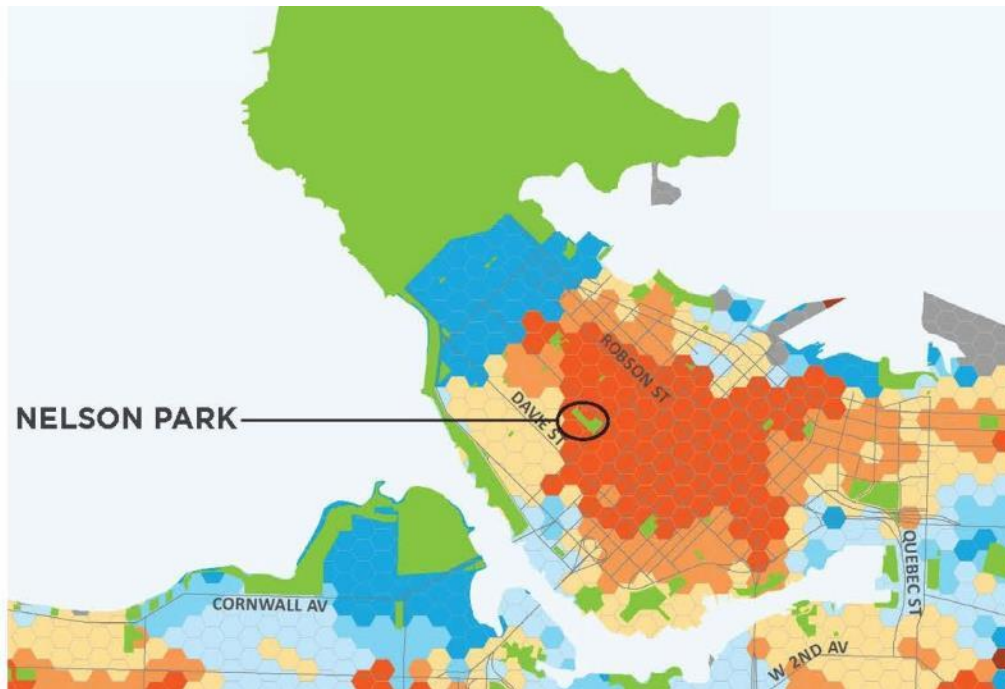
The Initiative Zones highlights historically underserved areas, so that projects, programs and resources can be focused geographically. The intent is to use this as one tool for setting priorities.

- LEGEND**
- ▲ COMMUNITY CENTRES
 - (2) INDICATORS
 - (3) INDICATORS
 - GREEN SPACES
 - WATER
 - ▬ MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY



West End Park Service Levels

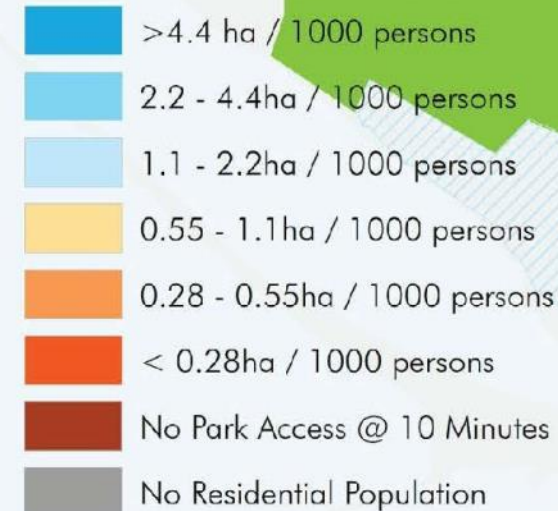
- The West End contains 6 of the top 10 parks* with the highest number of residents within a ten minute walk in Vancouver, which includes Nelson Park



Source: VanPlay 2018

Hectares Park Area /1000 Persons

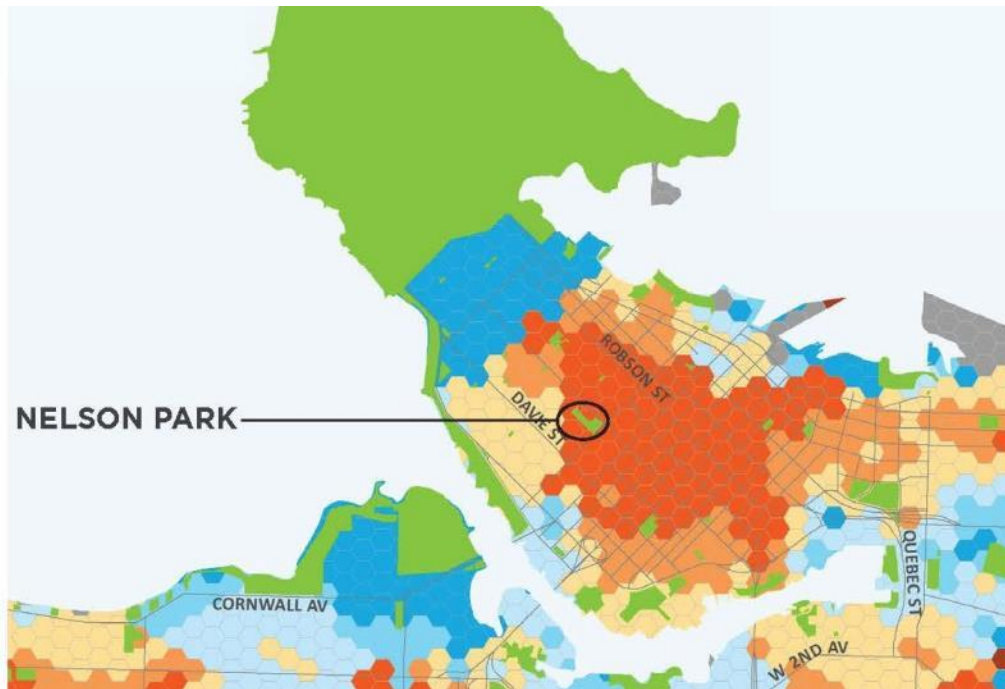
@10 Minute Walking Distance



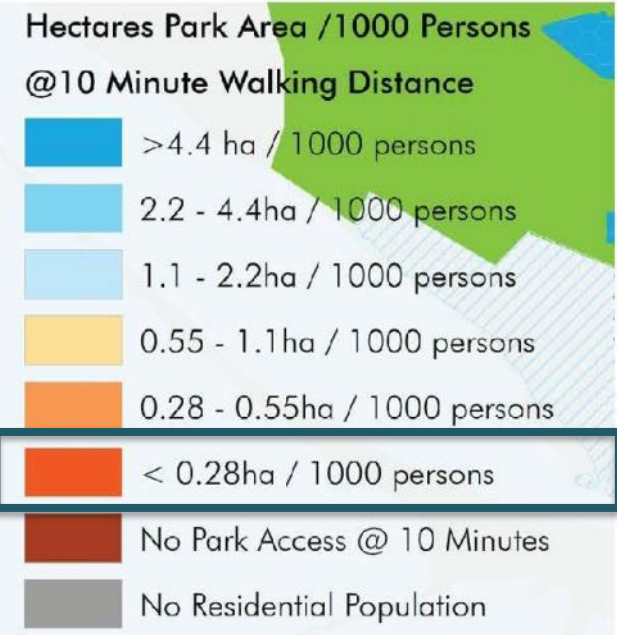
*excluding Andy Livingstone Park
and English Bay Beach Park

West End Park Service Levels

- The West End contains 6 of the top 10 parks* with the highest number of residents within a ten minute walk in Vancouver, which includes Nelson Park

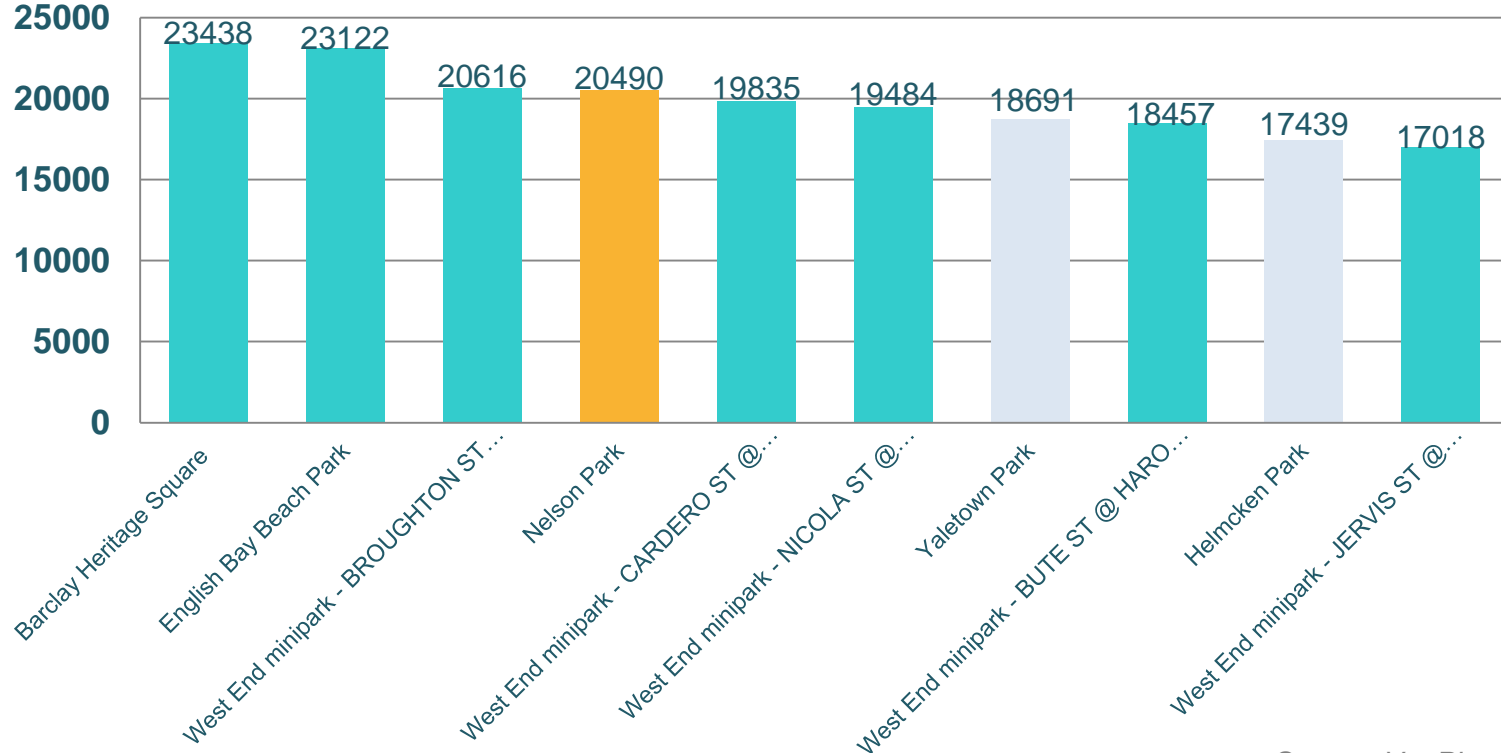


Source: VanPlay 2018

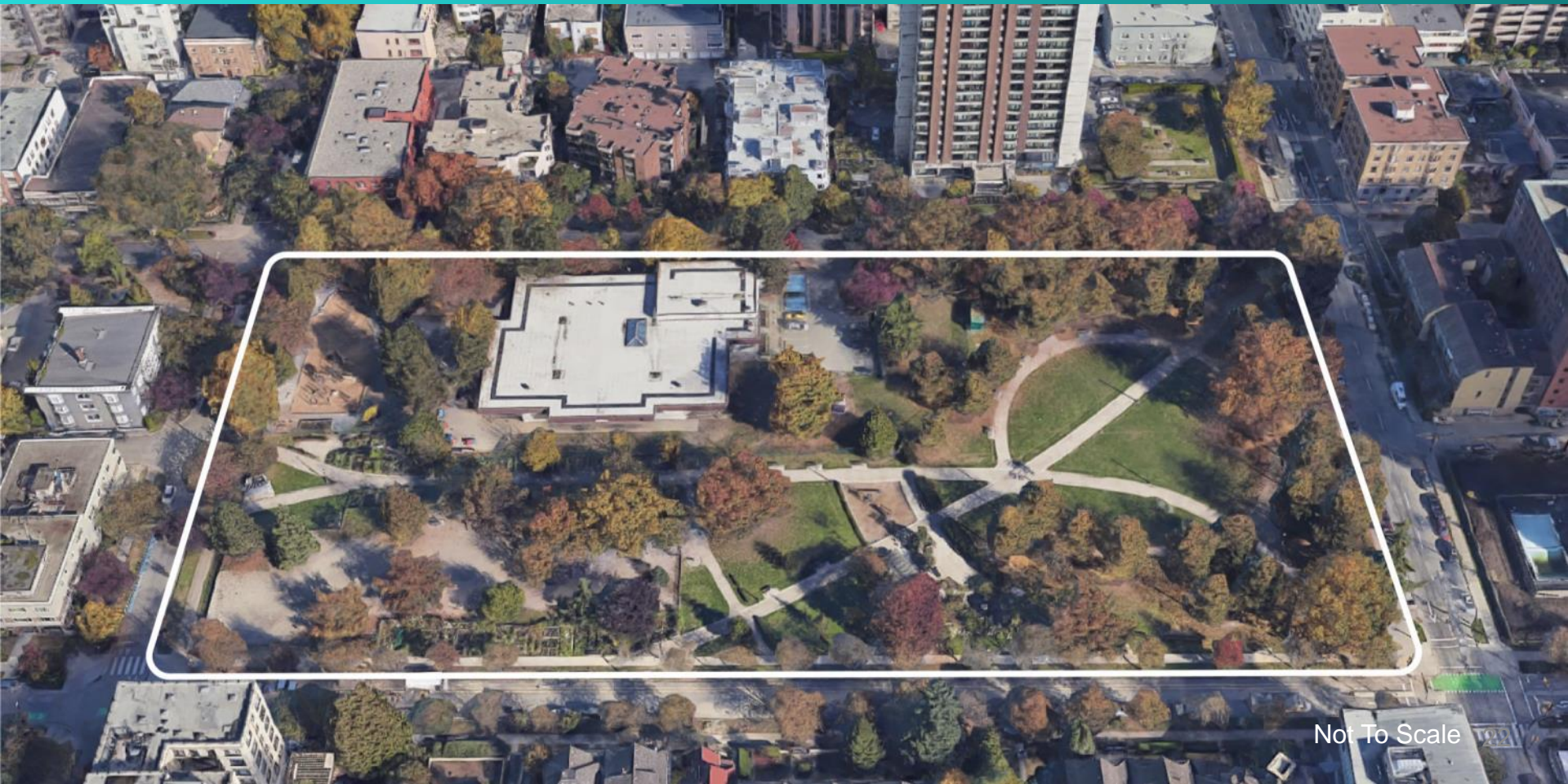


*excluding Andy Livingstone Park
and English Bay Beach Park

- Number of residents served within a ten-minute walk of parks



Nelson Park Today



Not To Scale

Nelson Park Today



Not To Scale

Nelson Park Today



Not To Scale

Nelson Park Today



Off-Leash

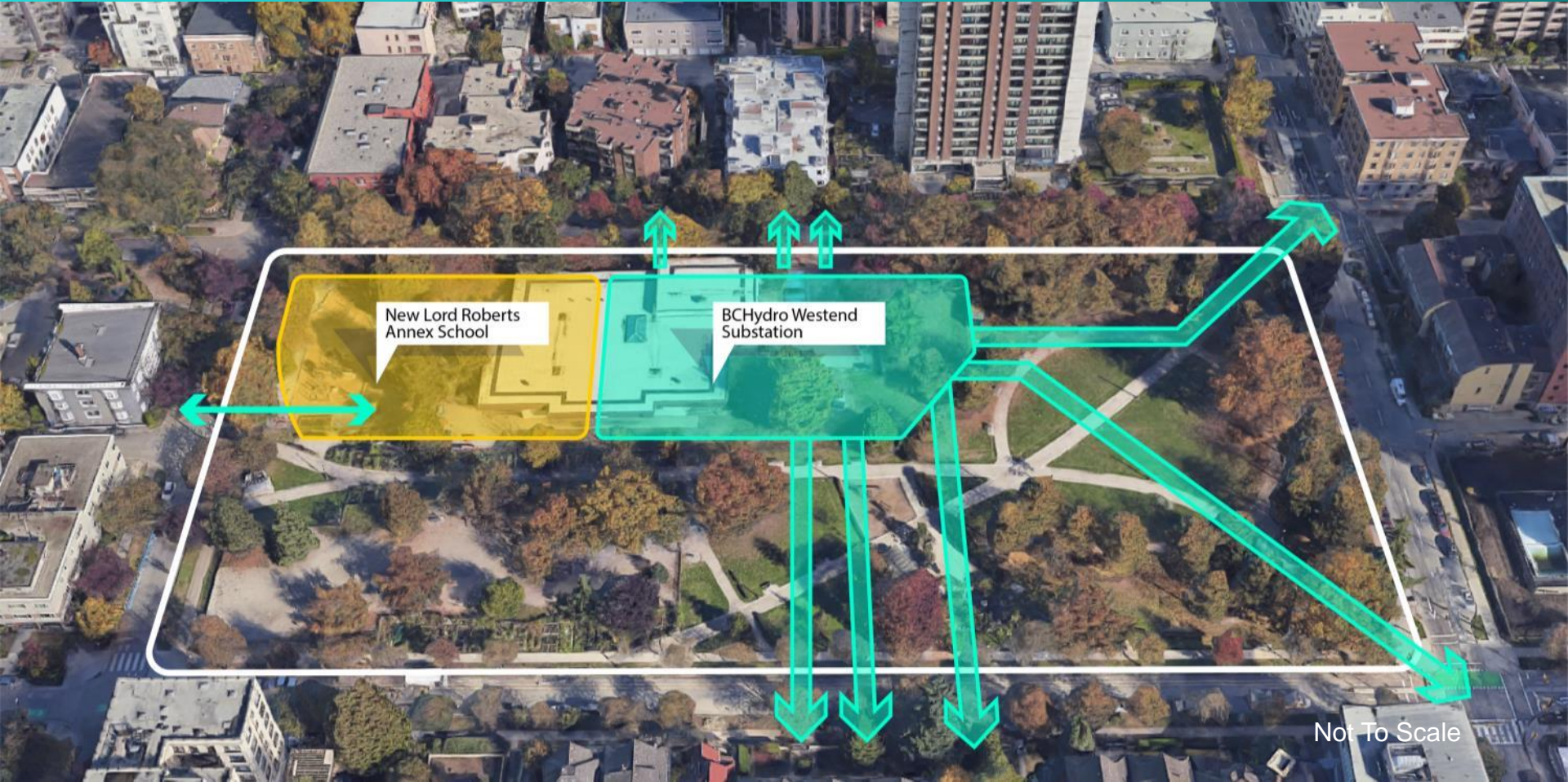
Not To Scale

Nelson Park Today



Not To Scale

BC Hydro Rights-of-Way Proposal



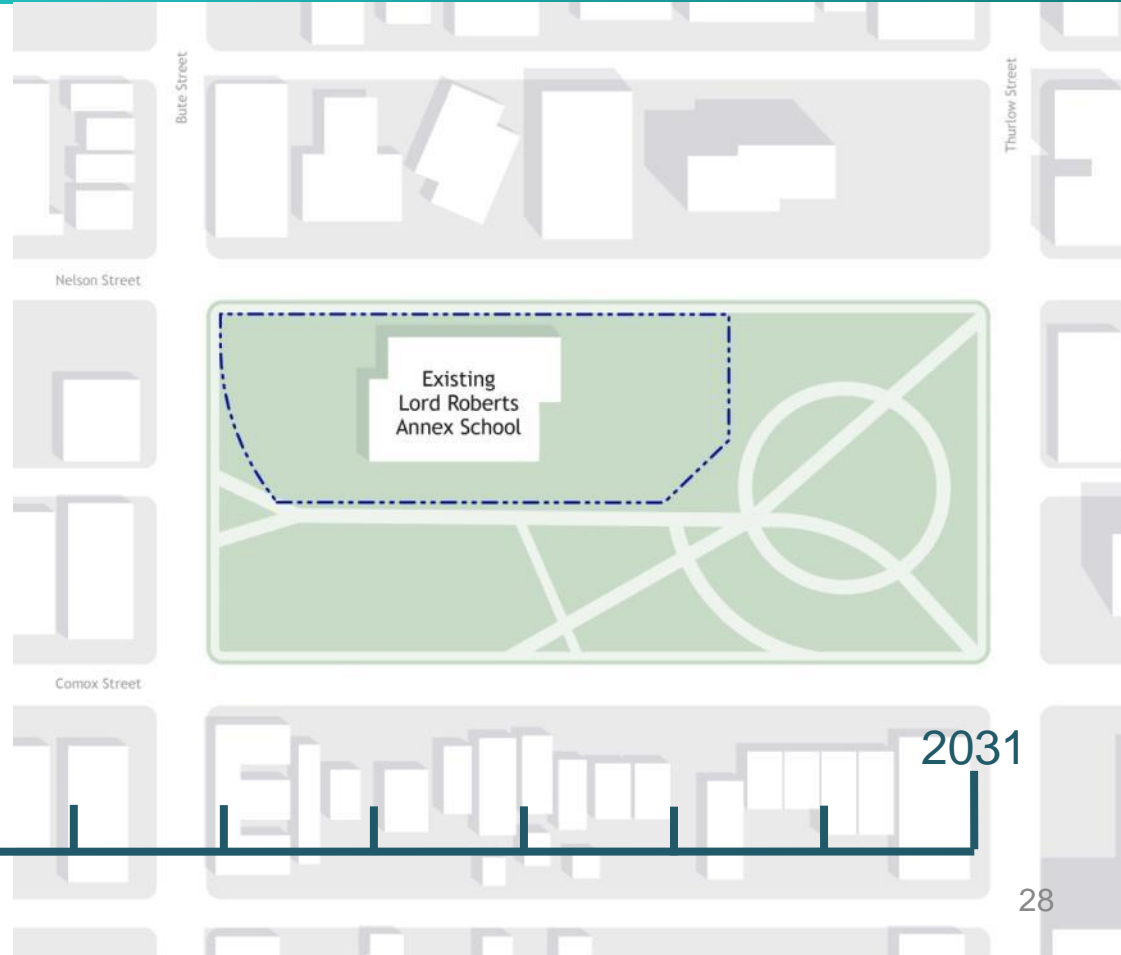
New Lord Roberts
Annex School

BCHydro Westend
Substation

Not To Scale

BC Hydro and the VSB have developed a multi-year* plan for the Lord Roberts Annex Site

2020-2023 – Design Phase



**All dates tentative*
Source: BC Hydro and VSB

2023 - Demolish the existing Lord Roberts Annex School

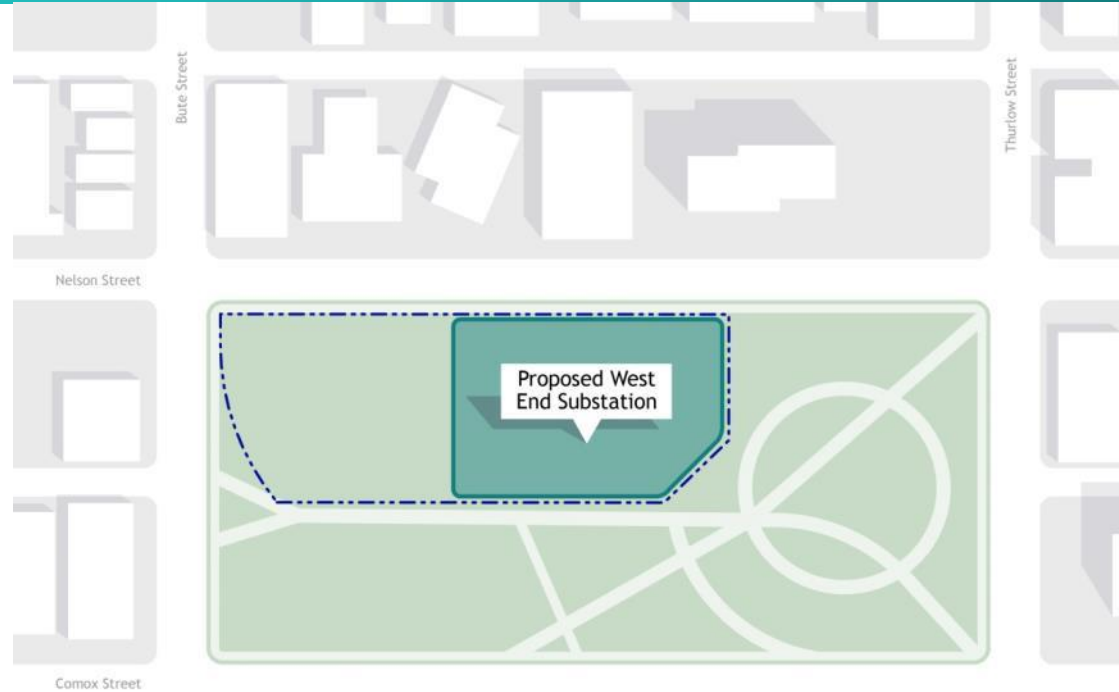
** Project start date linked to the opening of the new Coal Harbour school*



**All dates tentative
Source: BC Hydro and VSB*

2024 - 2028 Excavate & construct the new West End Substation

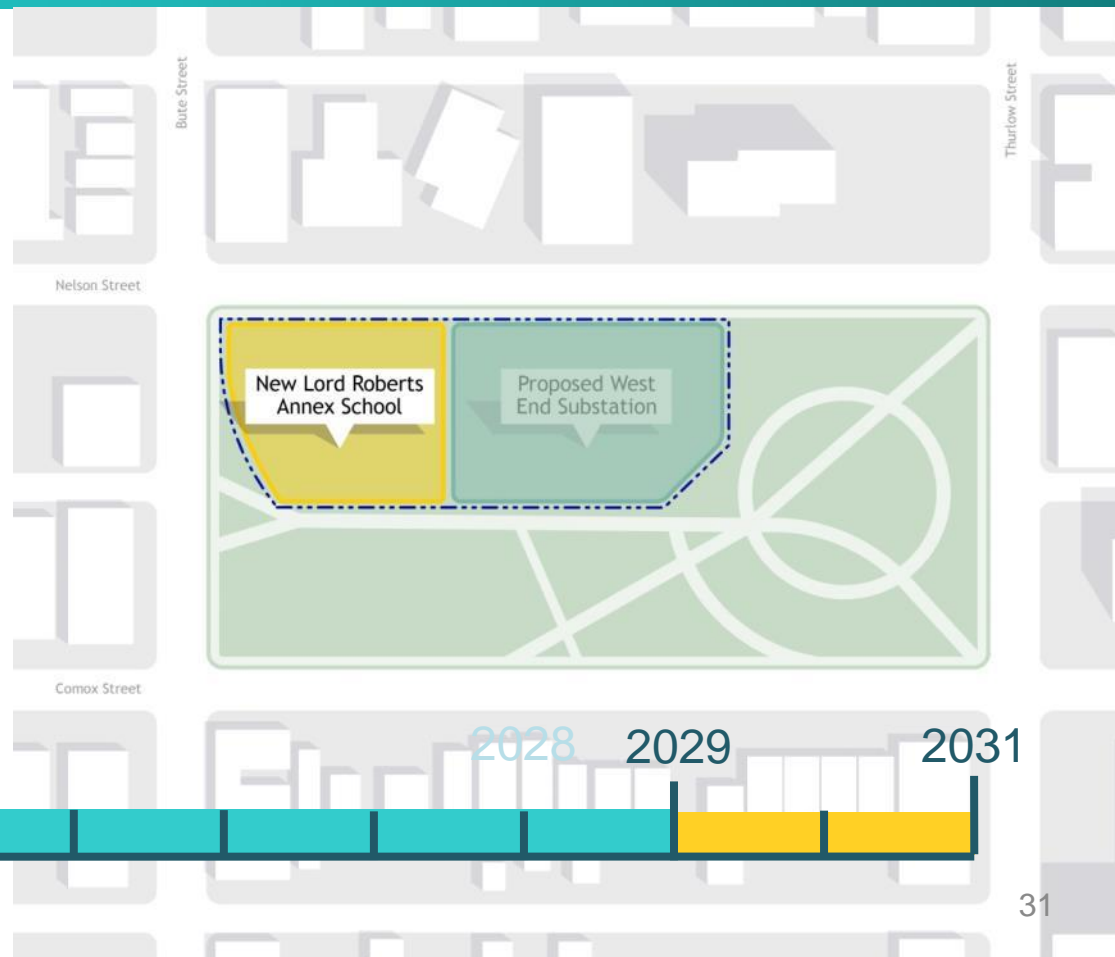
- Proposed substation depth is 37m (121')



**All dates tentative*

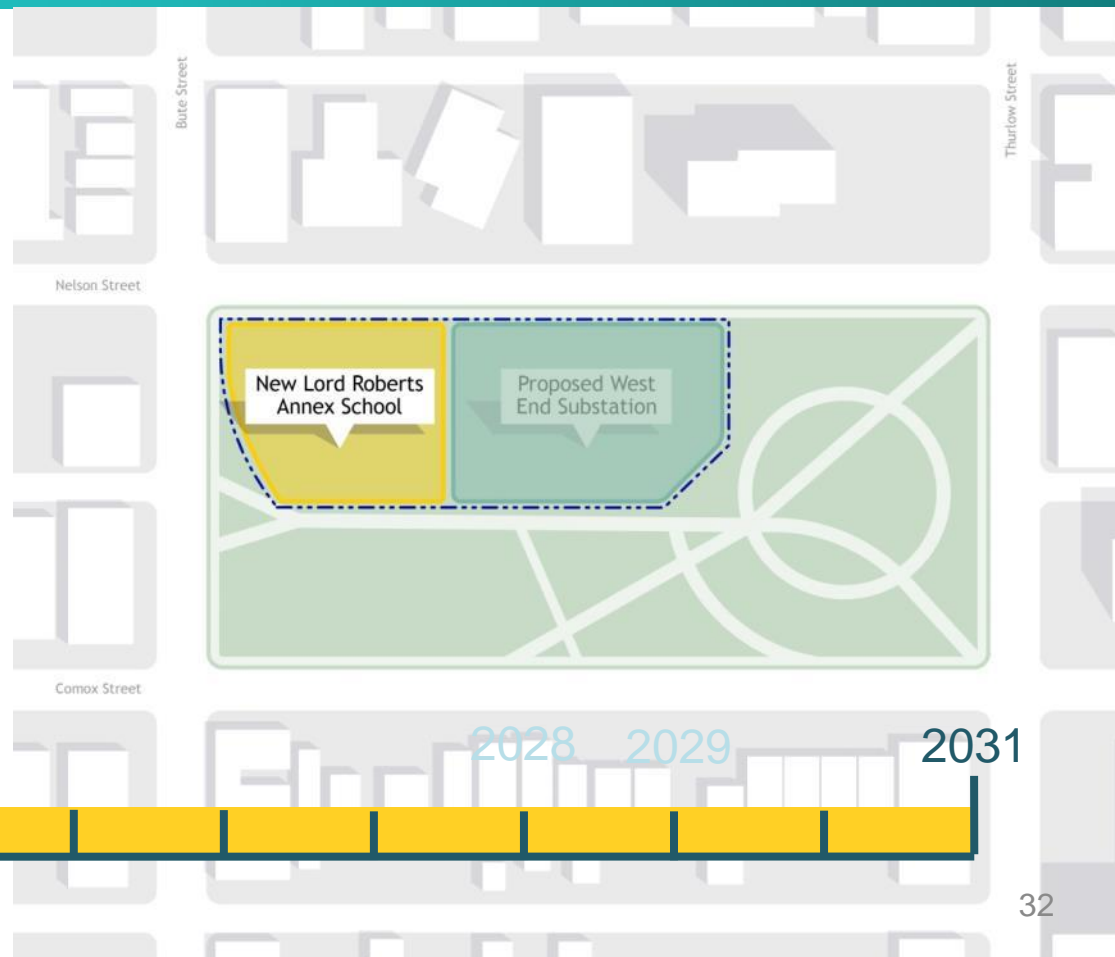
Source: BC Hydro seed: Technical Environmental and Socio-Economic Study

2029 - 2031 Construct the new Lord Roberts Annex School



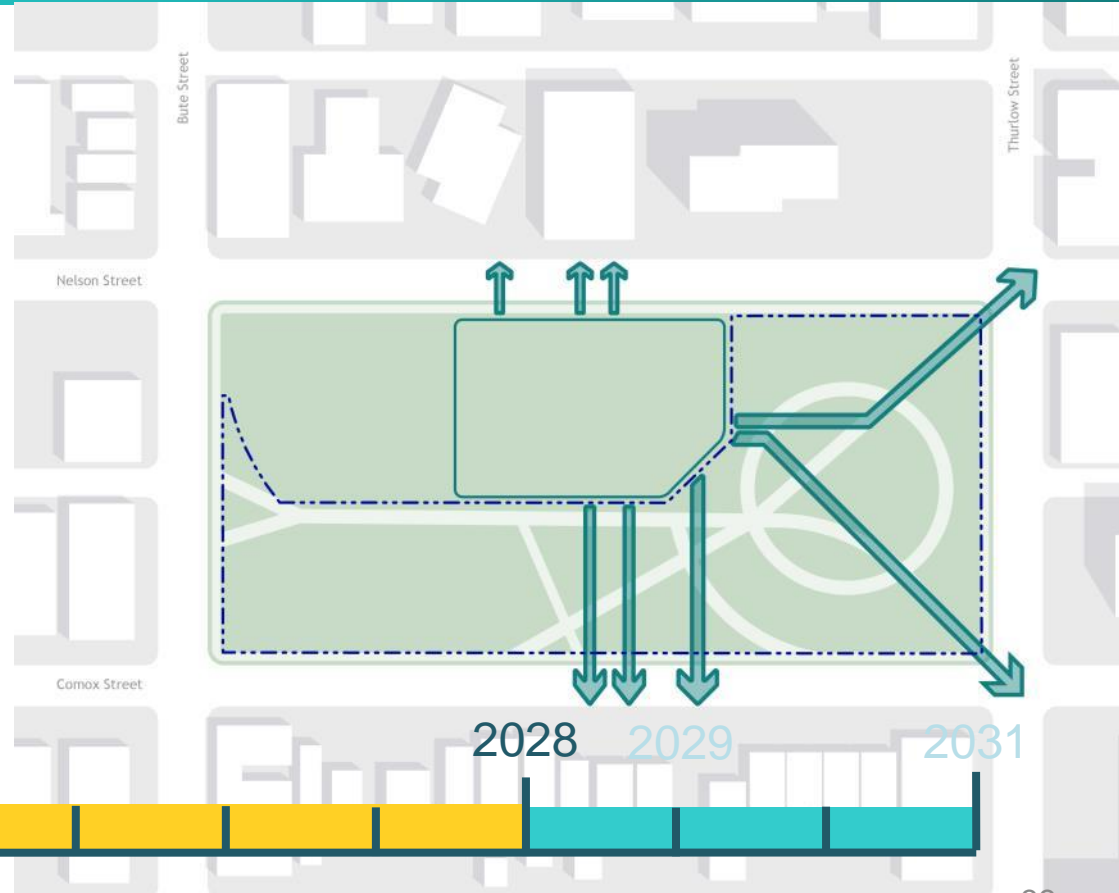
**All dates tentative
Source: BC Hydro and VSB*

2023-2031 – 8yrs total construction time



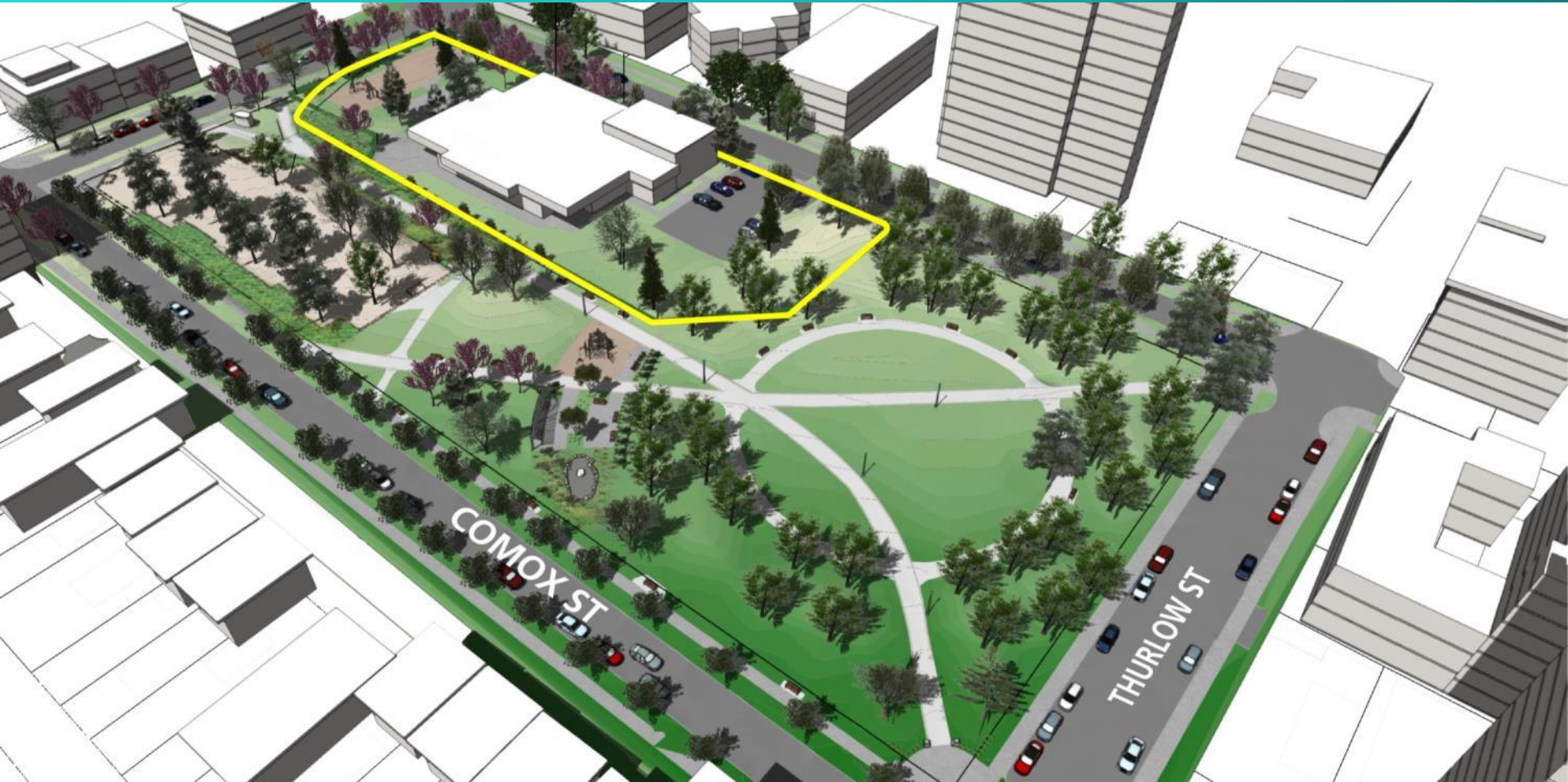
**All dates tentative
Source: BC Hydro and VSB*

202? - Install transmission and distribution cables in Nelson Park – date to be coordinated between BCH and VPB

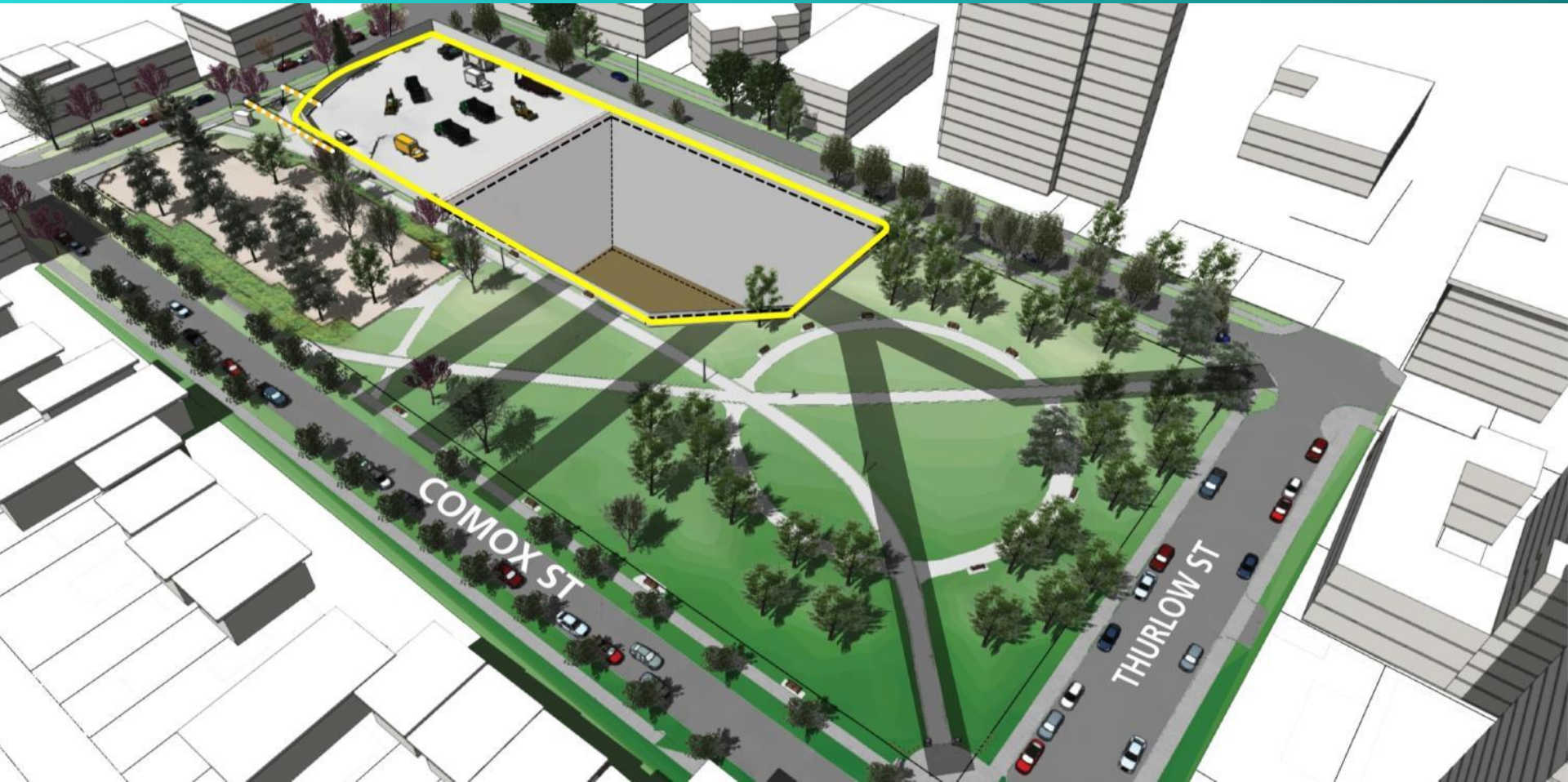


**All dates tentative
Source: BC Hydro and VSB*

Nelson Park - Today

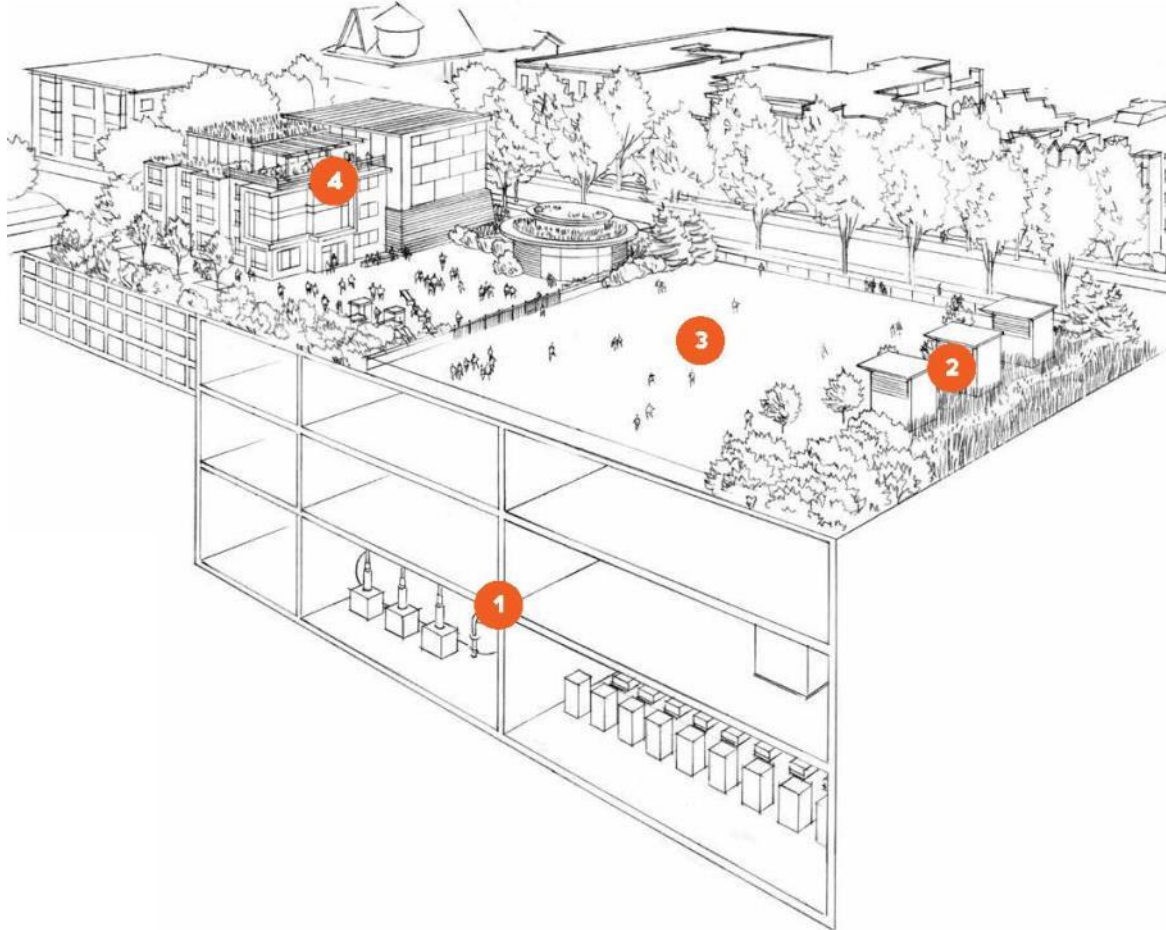


Nelson Park – During Construction



BC Hydro's Proposal

- 1 Underground Substation
- 2 Substation Vents
- 3 Synthetic Turf Field
- 4 Conceptual sketch of new elementary school, built by VSB after substation complete



Part II - Nelson Park Engagement





Engagement Process

- Two open houses were held during the engagement process for the public & stakeholders.
- Discussion Guide produced to simplify information
- 1,400 mail-outs were delivered to local residents & businesses.
- An online survey was accessible to all residents of Vancouver.



Engagement Process

The Discussion Guide was produced to simplify the complex information & work in partnership with open house boards.

It provided simple graphics & synopsis of key information.



Engagement Process

Two stakeholder consultation meetings were held, during the engagement process.

As well as those noted on the map, numerous other nearby residential complexes were also consulted.



Who Participated?



Questions Asked:

1. What do you think are the most important topics for the Vancouver Park Board to consider when making a decision about BC Hydro's request to bury underground power cables through Nelson Park?
2. Are there potential impacts on Nelson Park not reported in the Discussion Guide that you think are important to consider?
3. Do you have any ideas that could help address some of the impacts described in the Discussion Guide?

4. Do you agree or disagree with the Vancouver Park Board accepting BC Hydro's request for underground power cables through Nelson Park?



Agree Responses:

- Support investment in infrastructure to meet future demand
- Underground would be less impactful once built
- Accepting BC Hydro's proposal has most long term public benefits, including access to schools
- There are a lack of better alternatives



Agree Responses:

“Impacts would mostly seem to be very short term.”

“Power needs are increasing”

“I’m not too concerned about the impacts in the short term. The benefit of supporting West End growth and a new school is more important.”

“Refusing BC Hydro's request is not an option. We need those cables.”

Disagree Responses:

- Concerns about public health & safety i.e. Electric & Magnetic Fields (EMF's)
- Impacts on park, particularly urban forest, gardens, playground & access to green space
- Disruption to community too great, during construction, maintenance afterwards & risk of accidents
- Loss of parkland to infrastructure development
- BC Hydro provided inadequate consideration of alternative locations



Disagree Responses:

“Ongoing maintenance is unknown. Once BC Hydro gets permission the first time, it sets a precedent to allow more projects.”

“Lack of access to play spaces will have a huge impact on children and their parents. And citizens are always concerned when trees are cut down.”

I’m concerned about the safety of the children that will be sitting in classrooms above the underground cables, day in day out, year after year, is BC Hydro 1000% sure this is safe??

Part III – Impact Study



STUDY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- ▶ **Review** findings from BC Hydro's previous studies and identify potential gaps in information or questions that will support informed review and decision-making.
- ▶ Identify potential **direct impacts** to Nelson Park if the Park Board were to grant BC Hydro the requested rights-of-way.
- ▶ Identify potential **indirect impacts** to Nelson Park as a result of BC Hydro's underground substation development at the adjacent Lord Roberts Annex site including both short-term (during the construction process) and long-term (post-construction, when the new substation is in operation) impacts.
- ▶ Identify potential **mitigation considerations** that could help alleviate the aforementioned short-term and long-term impacts.

- Eight themes were developed, to assess the various elements of Nelson Park.
- These themes were also used as tools for the public, to gain a clearer understanding of the proposal & the implications.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS TOPICS



PARK
FEATURES



URBAN
FOREST



SUBSURFACE
HYDROLOGY



ENVIRONMENT
& WILDLIFE



GEOTECHNICAL



CONSTRUCTION
IMPACTS & UTILITIES



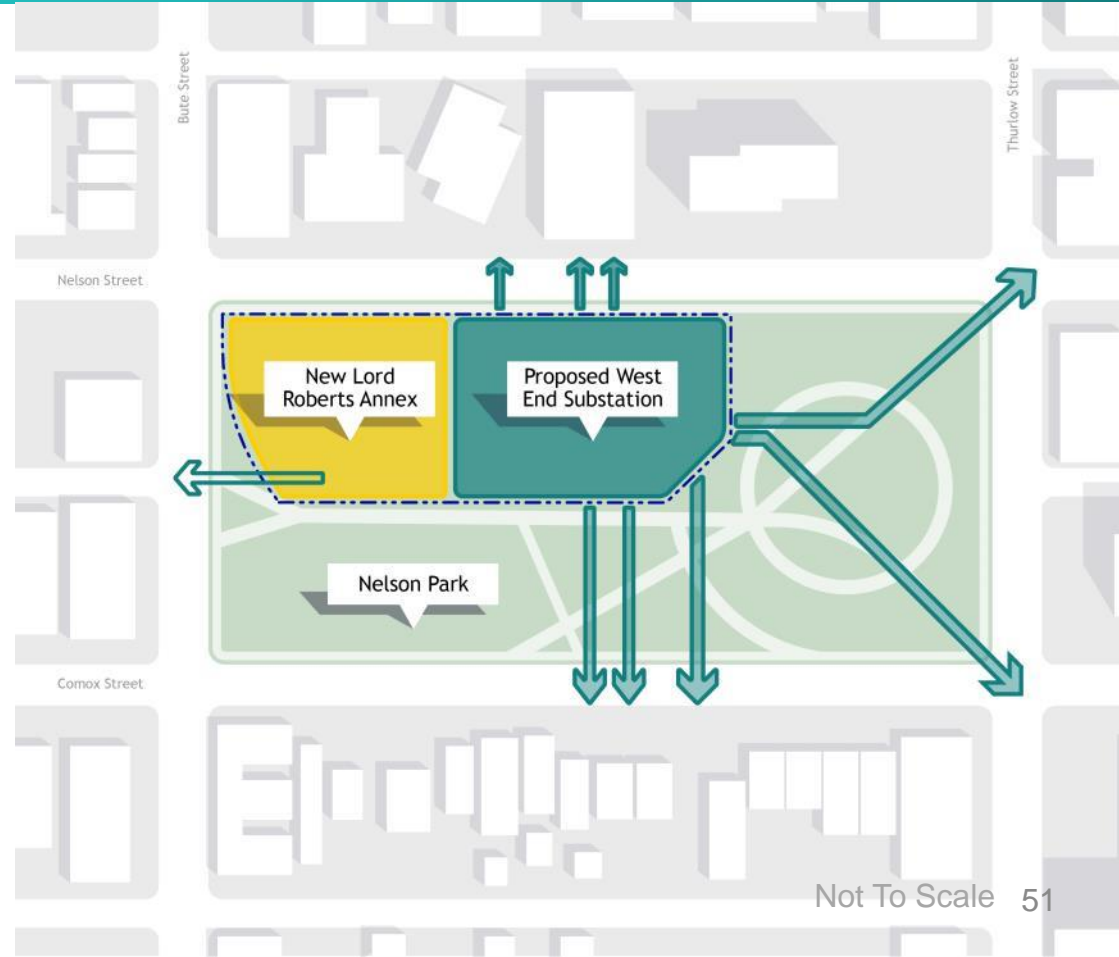
PUBLIC HEALTH
& NUISANCE



PUBLIC
SAFETY

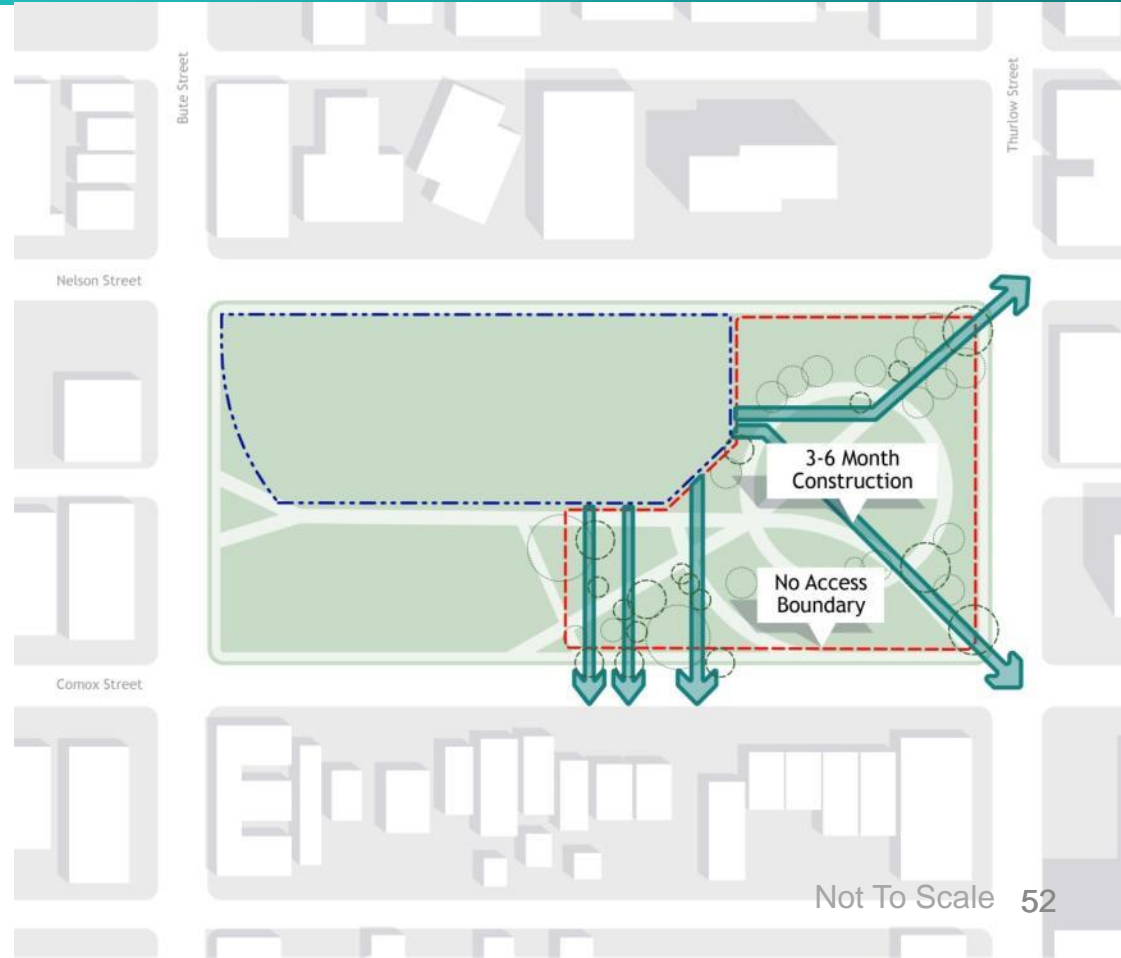
Site Wide - Impacts

- Short term (3-6 mo)
- Mid term (1-8 yrs)
- Long term (8-Indefinite)



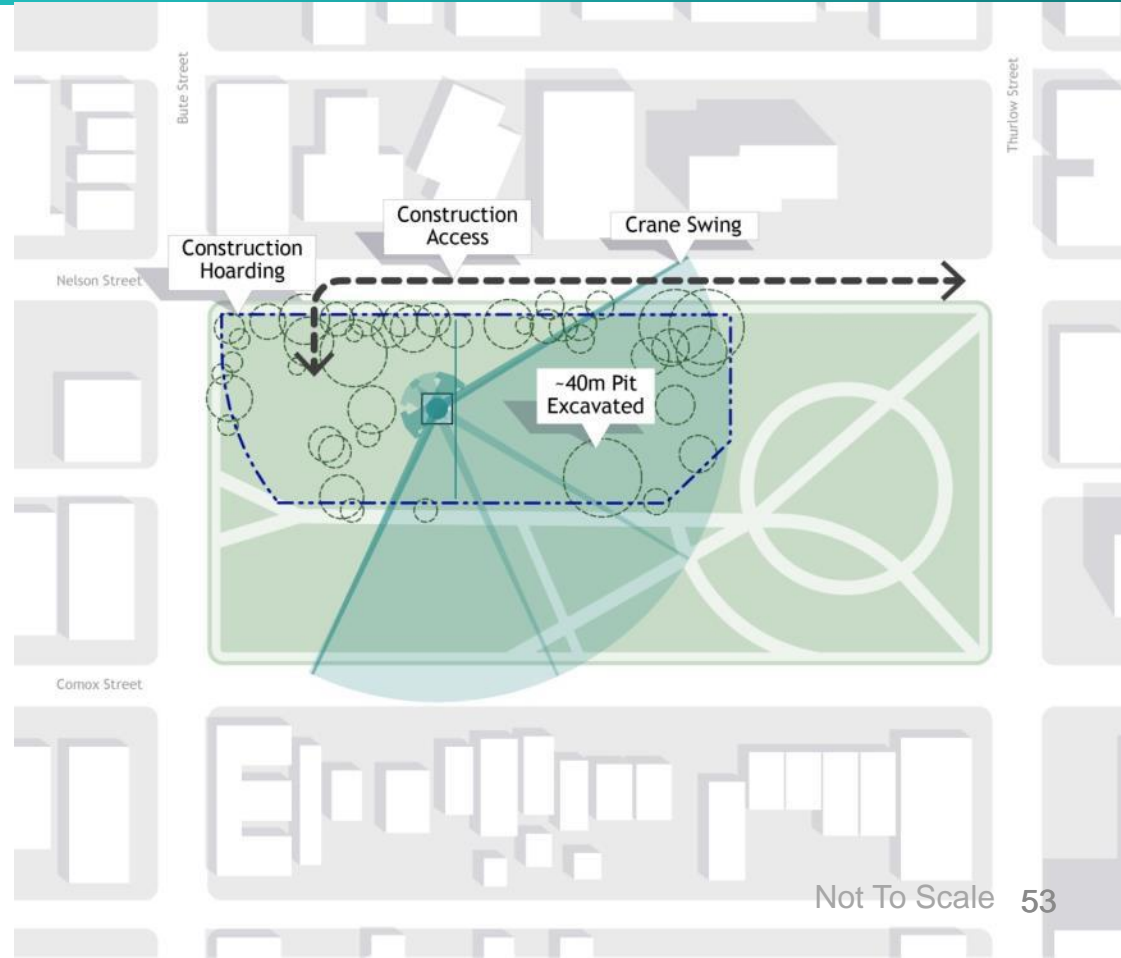
Short Term Impact: 3-6mo ROW Construction (winter)

- Tree Removals
- Trenching & Excavation
- Noise, Dust, Vibrations
- Partial Closure of Park & Restricted Access
- Park Restoration



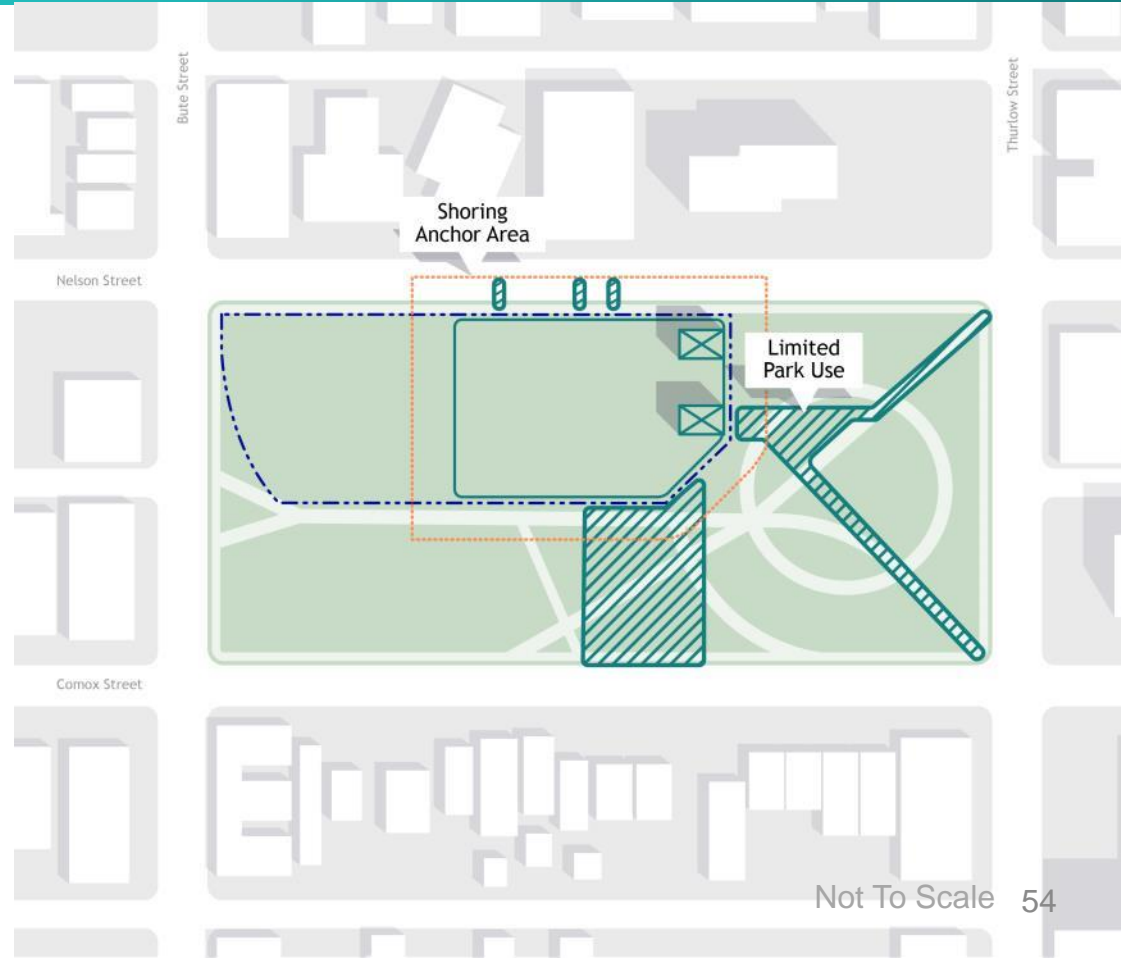
Mid Term Impact: 8yrs Substation & School Construction

- Tree Removals (~46 LRA)
- Noise, Dust & Vibrations
- Crane Swing (Overhead)
- Excavation (Pit & Hoarding)
- Construction Activity

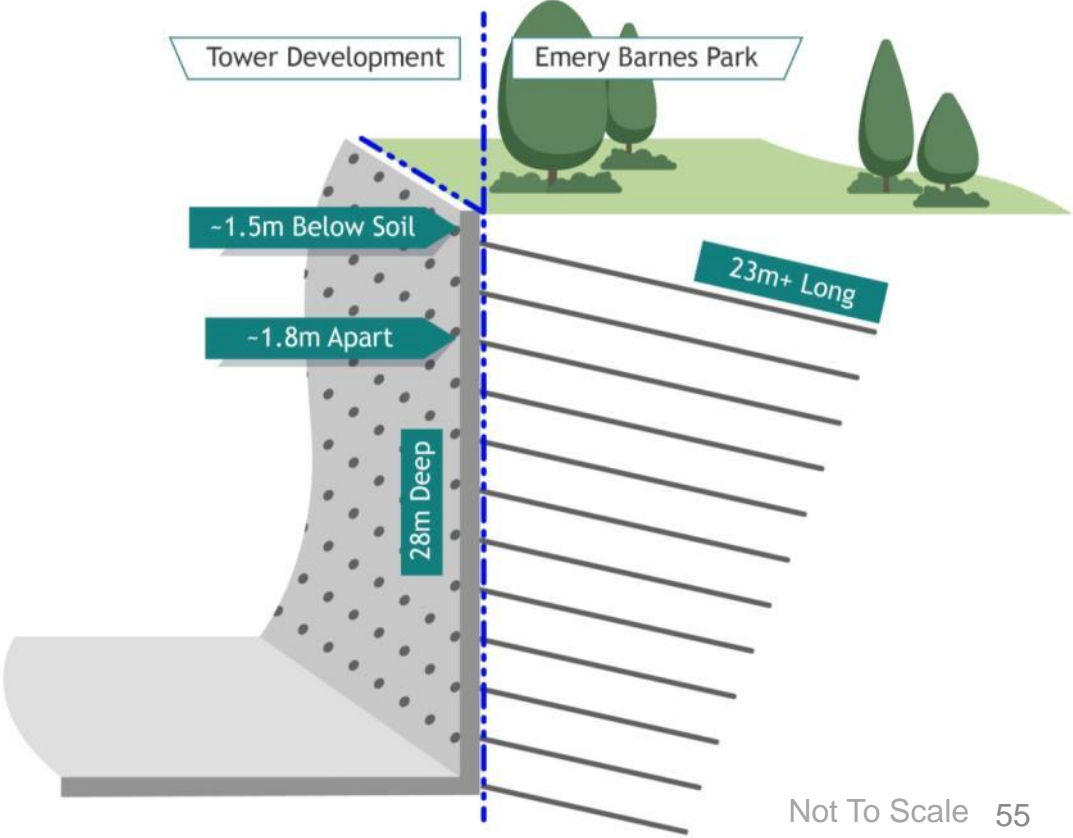


Long Term Impact: 8y-Indefinite ROW & Substation Operation

- Encumbrances
(limitations to park)
- Concerns related EMF
- BC Hydro Maintenance
- Noise (venting)
- Shoring Anchors

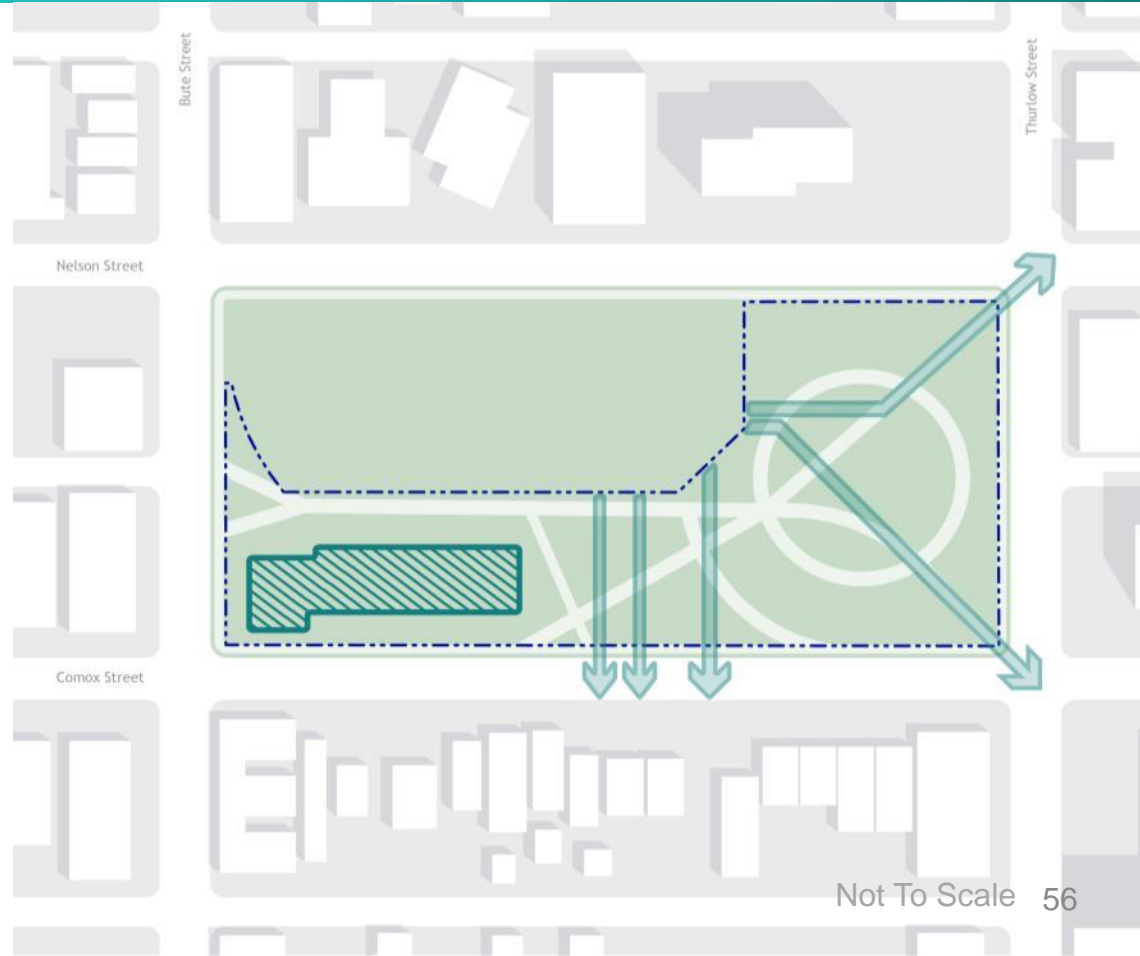


Emery Barnes Example

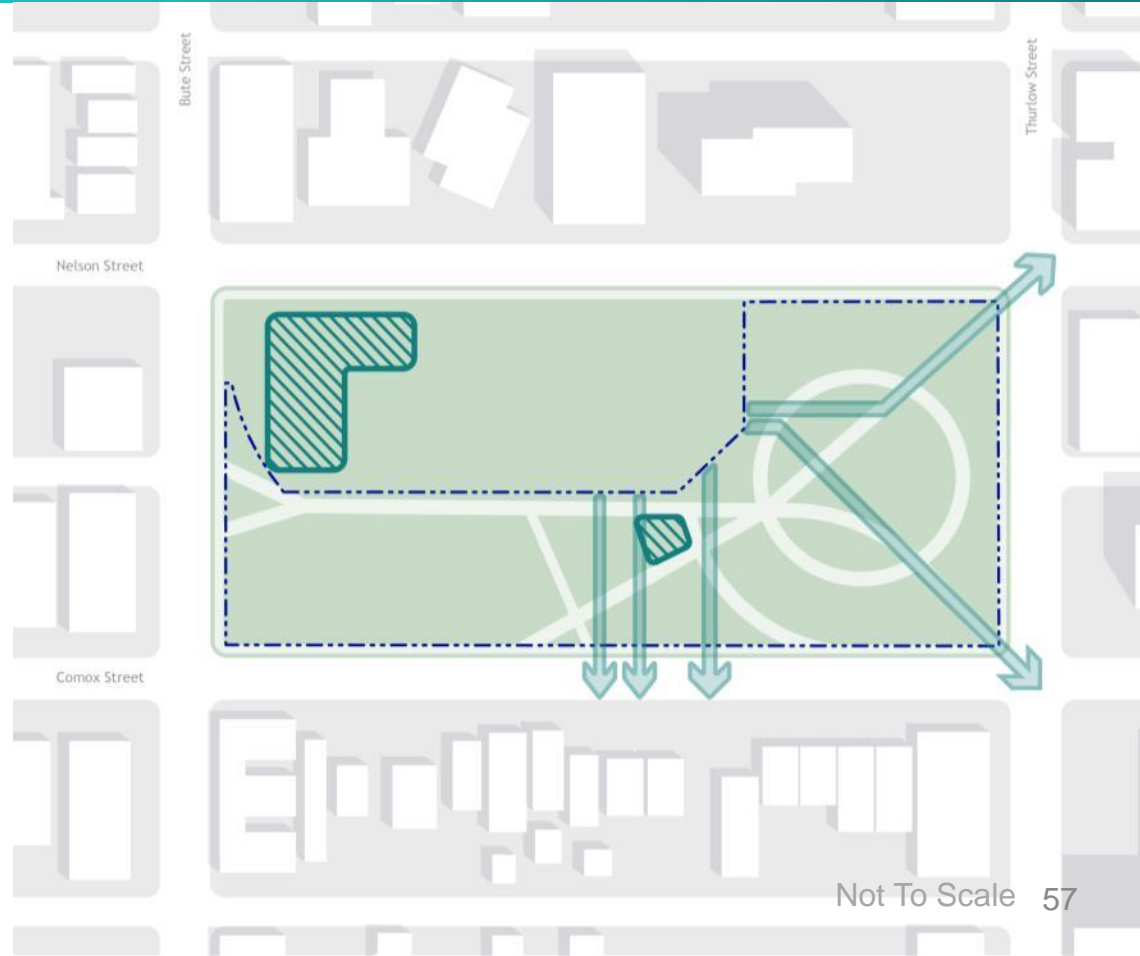


Impact & Mitigation Study – Dog Off-Leash Area (OLA)

- ROW not anticipated to have direct impact on dog off-leash area.
- Some dogs are sensitive to dust & loud noises, which may restrict use during construction.
- Dog owners may use alternative off-leash sites, placing strain on other sites.



- Nelson park playground will be removed during installation of cables
- Lord Roberts Annex playground will not be accessible during the substation and school construction



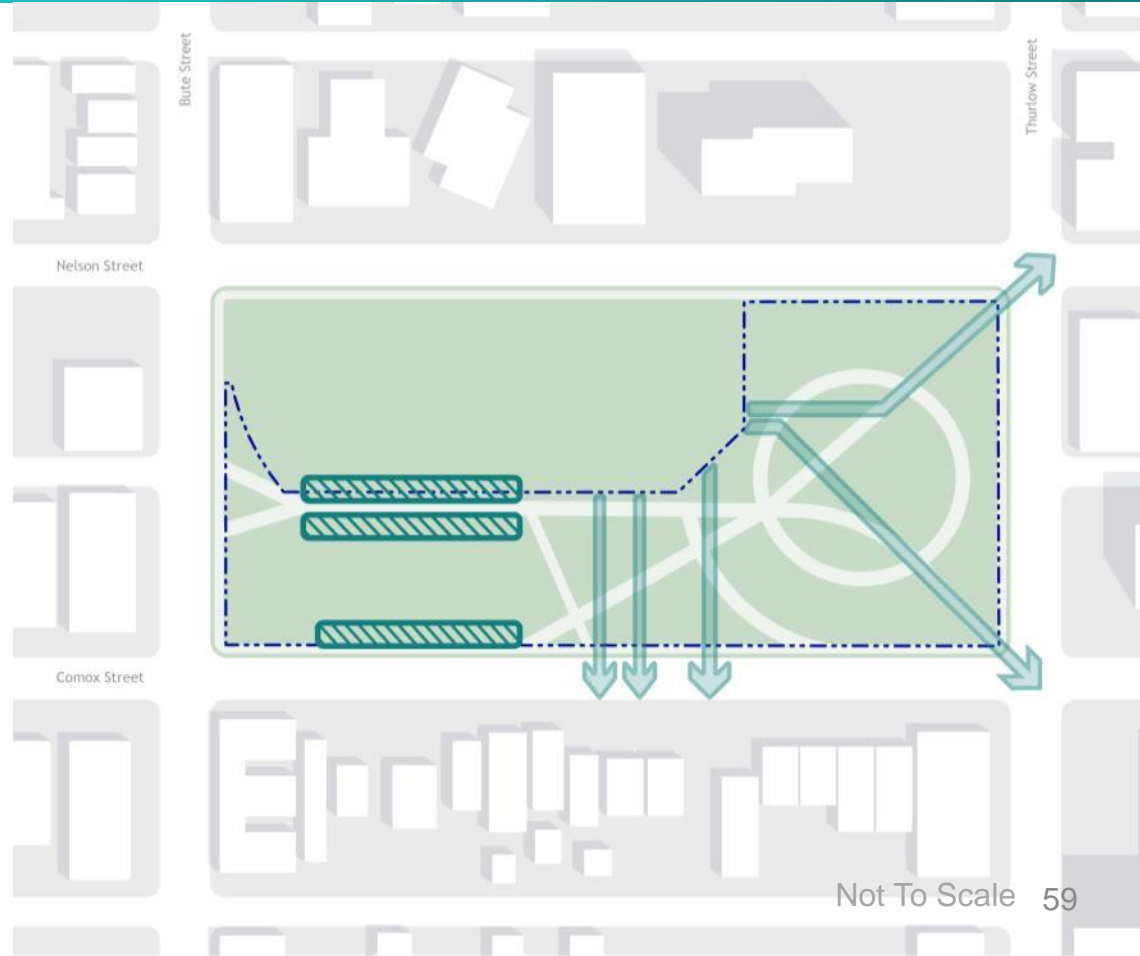


Lord Robert Annex Playground
Four Play Structures

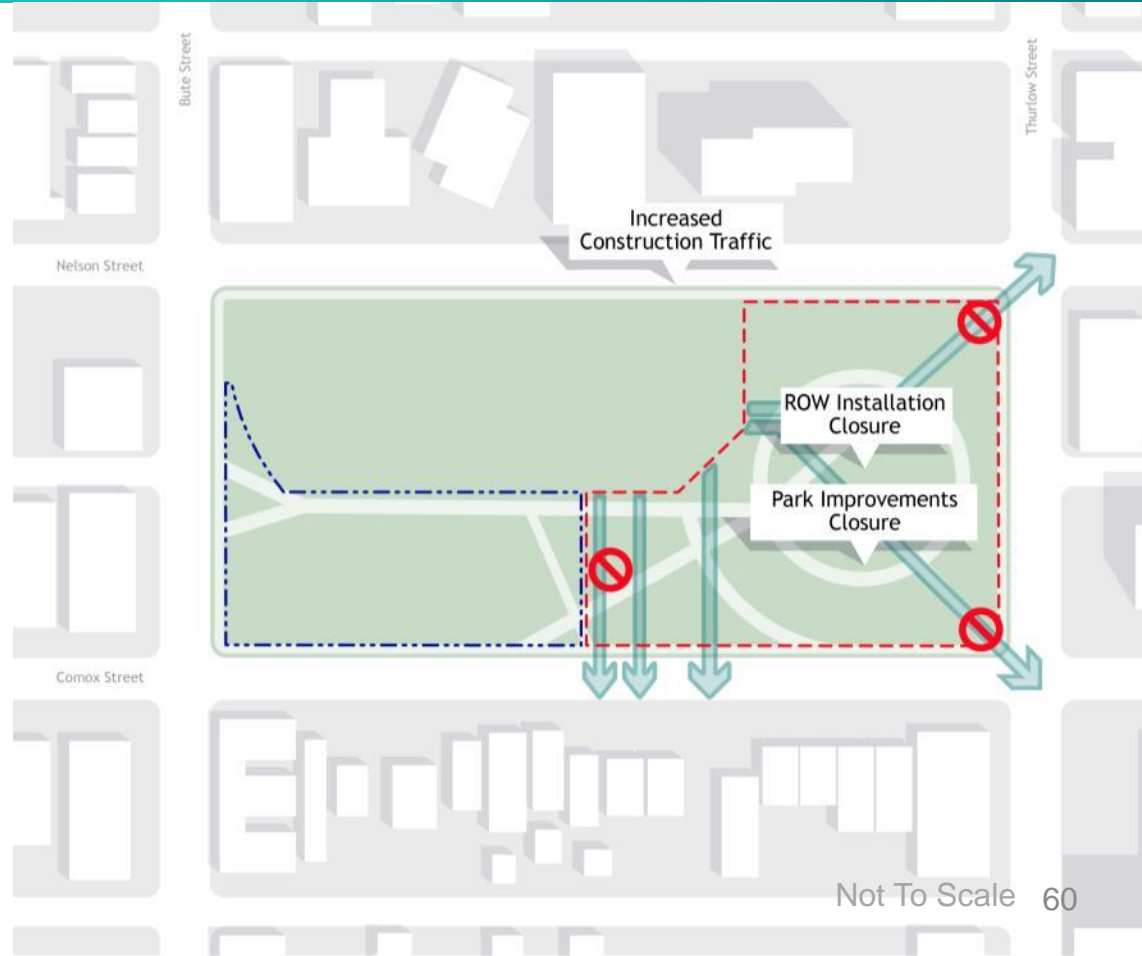


Nelson Park Playground
One Play Structure

- The northern-most row of the community gardens exist partially within the Lord Roberts Annex site will be significantly impacted.
- The remaining two southern sections of community garden will be indirectly impacted



- Construction work over many years will impact user experience
- BC Hydro has committed to installing the cables in Nelson Park during winter months to limit impact on park access



- Underground power cables may remove up to 20 trees, three of which are high priority trees
- All trees on the Lord Robert Annex site are to be removed

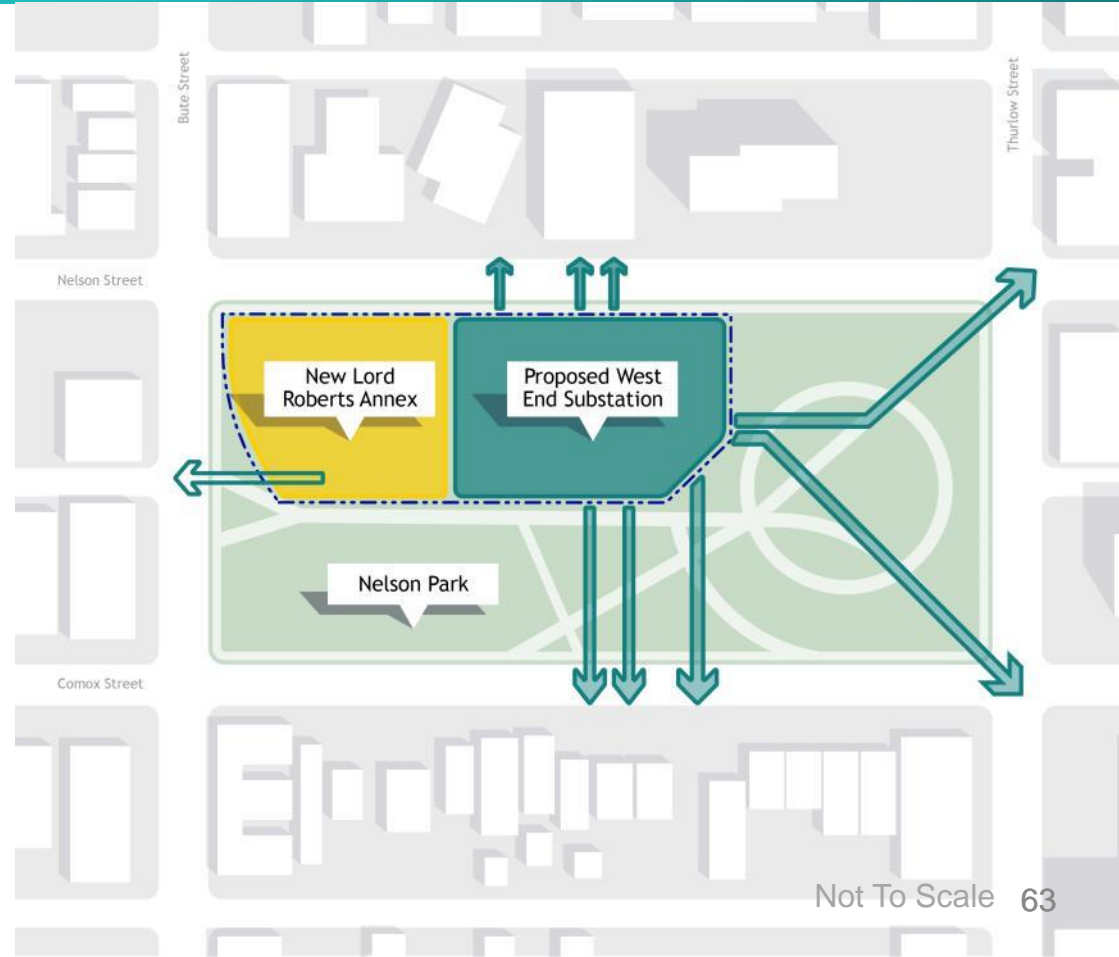


Part IV – Next Steps

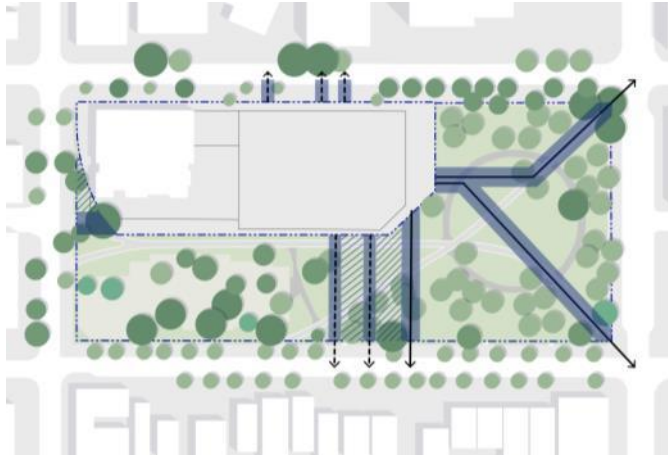


Project Timeline – Next Steps

- Staff are coordinating an alternative ROW alignment to minimize short-term, long-term, direct and indirect impacts of the project.



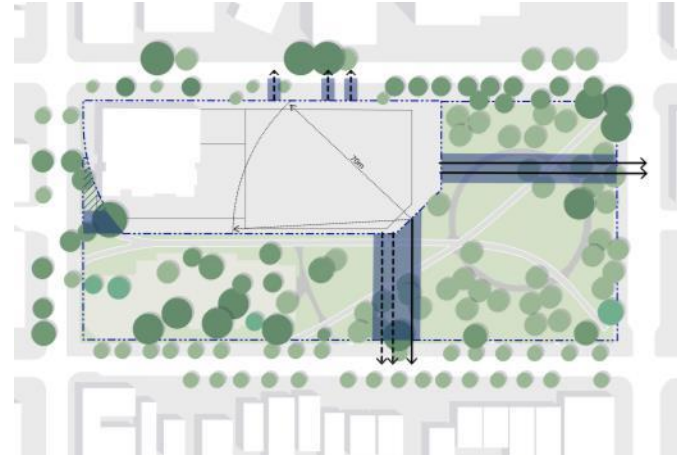
BC Hydro Proposed Alignment



- ROW/Easement: 1,993sqm
- ▨ Park Fragments: 800sqm

8 Lost/Impacted Significant Trees

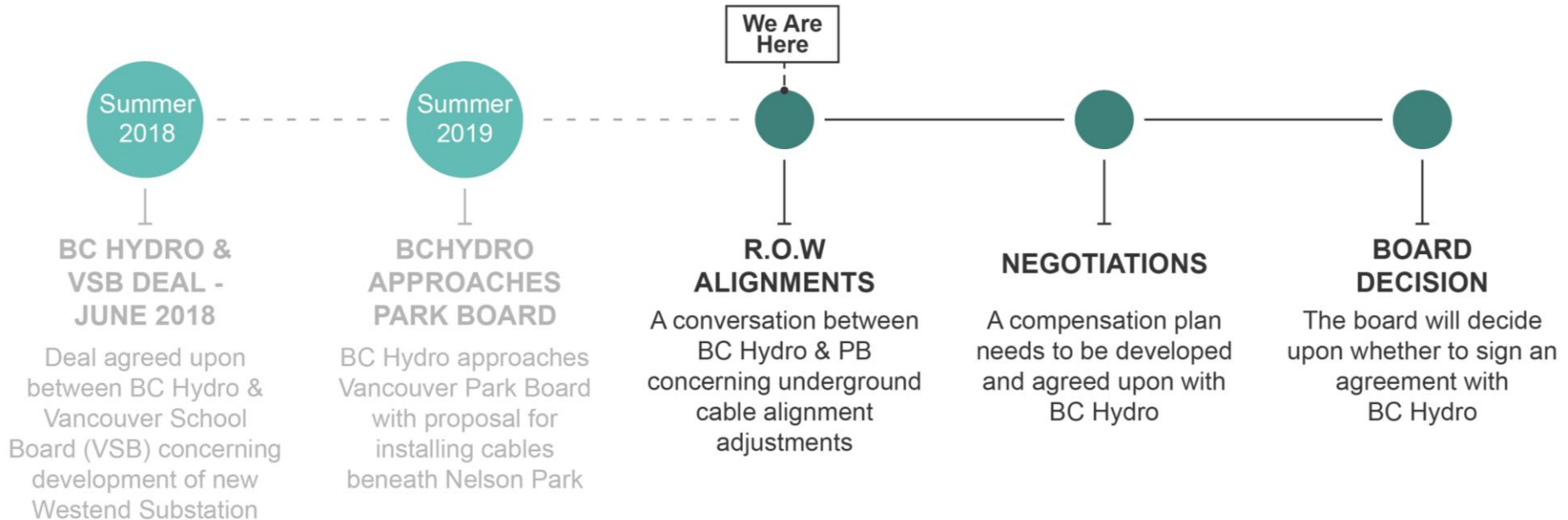
PB Proposed Alternate Alignment



- ROW/Easement: 1,525sqm
- ▨ Park Fragments: 193sqm

2 Lost/Impacted Significant Trees

Project Timeline – Next Steps



- Should the Board support moving forward with the right of way request, it requires approval by both the Park Board & Vancouver City Council
- The City is the registered owner of the land comprising the park & owns adjacent streets.
- Therefore, the City will be required to enter into any leases or statutory rights of way that may be required for the proposed substation & the underground high-voltage transmission lines.
- The Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction over permanent & temporary parks.
 - Council has not designated Nelson Park a permanent park.

- The project will have a lasting impact on the Park Board's ability to deliver services through Nelson Park
- The short term and long term impacts to the park are important, but are part of a larger project
- The public benefits of the West End Substation project should not be overlooked
 - Power infrastructure for residents and business in downtown
 - Funding to support schools in the West End and downtown

