



PROPOSED VANCOUVER URBAN FOOD FOREST IN BURRARD VIEW PARK

Report Back

Park Board Committee Meeting
Monday, March 28th, 2021



- To share staff's findings in response to Board's request to conduct "further consultation and engagement with the proponents, community, and other key stakeholders in order to identify a suitable location for the Vancouver Urban Food Forest in Burrard View Park" (herein "Food Forest")
- To present a recommendation for decision for a location for the Food Forest

1. Background

- Burrard View Park past and present
- Food Forest project overview
- Project timeline
- Supporting Policy

2. Proposed Garden Locations

- Technical Analysis
- Public Engagement

3. Recommended Option

4. Recommendation



1. Background

Background: Burrard View Park past and present



- Located in unceded MST territory
- Amenities include: daycare, playground, off-leash dog area (OLA), field house, passive recreational use
- Former site of:
 - “Babies Cottage” (now the Cottage Hospice)
 - A children’s home named “Wall St. Orphanage” and a juvenile detention home (both demolished)

- November, 2020: staff received an Expression of Interest to establish an urban food forest in the Hastings-Sunrise Neighbourhood
- Proponents: Vancouver Urban Food Forest Foundation (Kiwassa N'hood House, Lettuce Harvest, Refarmers, and others including Indigenous partners)
- Staff recommended Burrard View Park as the most suitable potential park



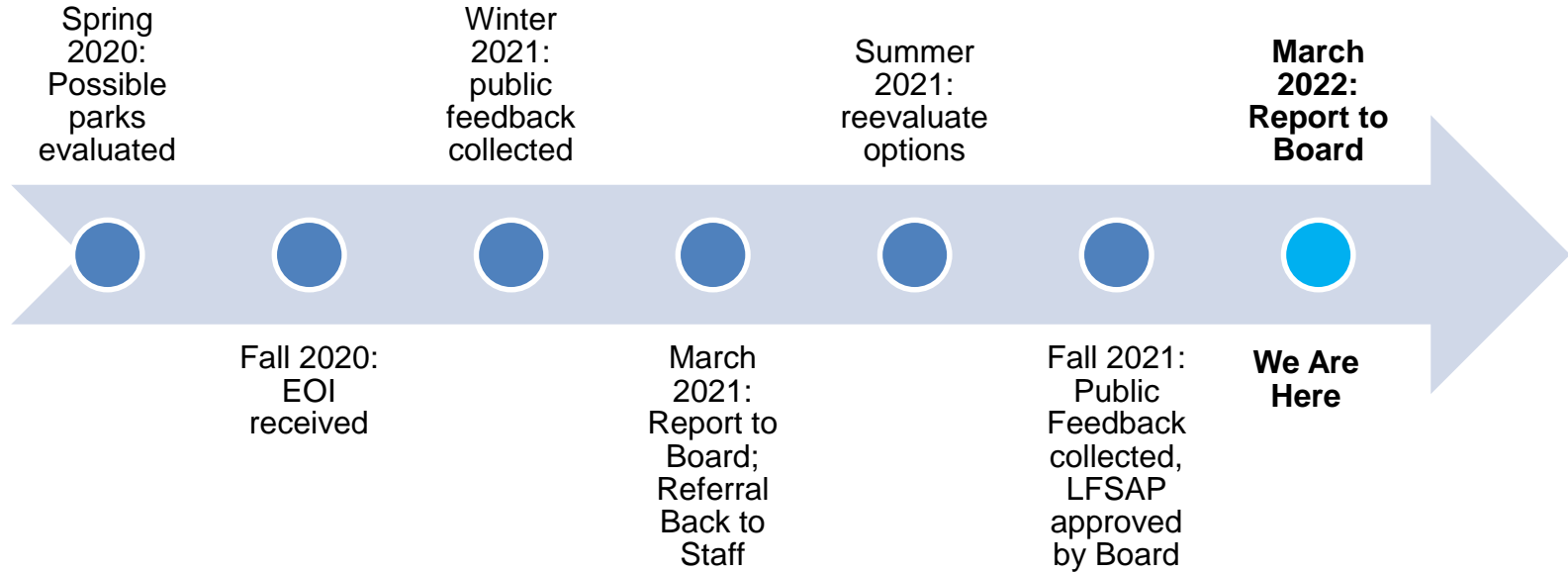
Key elements of the proposed Food Forest are:

- A food forest of native plants planned, maintained and programmed with Indigenous people
- An adjacent medicine wheel-inspired garden planted and maintained with permaculture practices
- Shared gardening and harvest; rather than individual plots
- Collaborative community programs to address food security and climate change

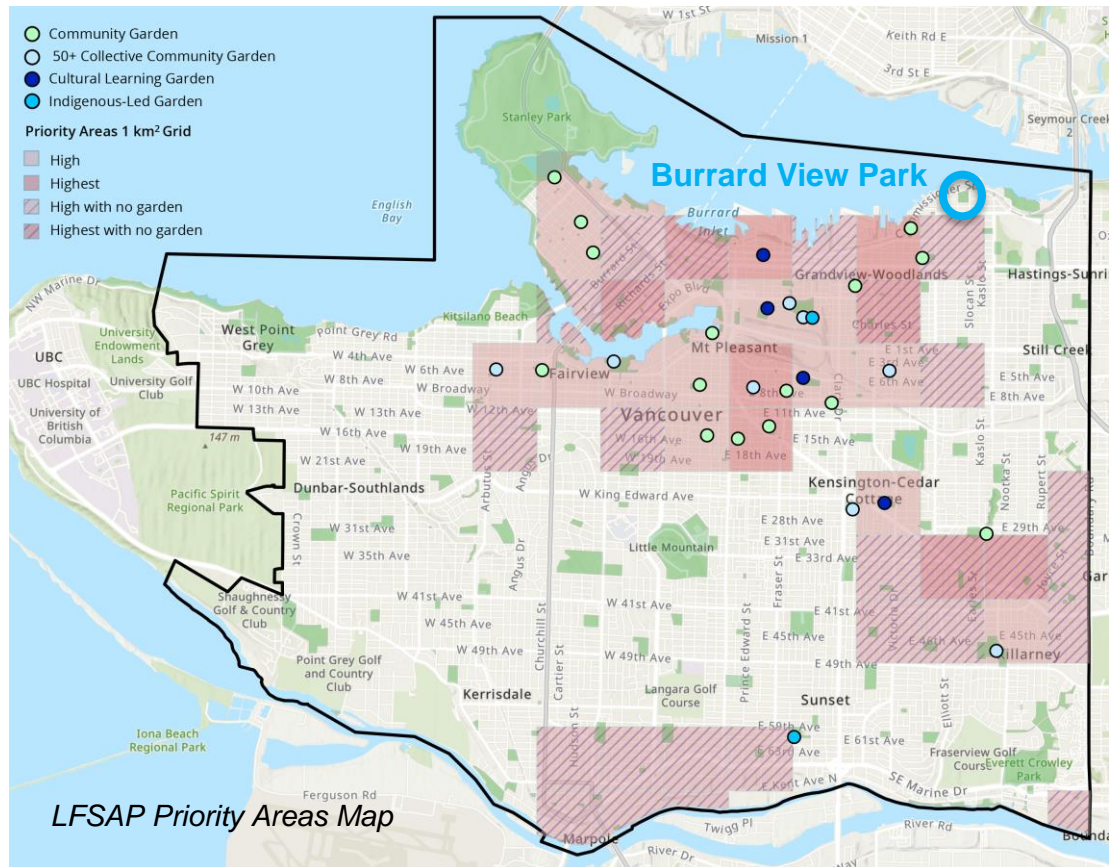


Strathcona Park, photo credit: Fernando Lessa

Background: Project Timeline



- VanPlay: Burrard View Park close to Equity Initiative Zones (EIZs)
- LFSAP: Park two blocks from high priority area for food and culture gardens
- Within 6-blocks of park: 60% low-rise apartment units / 40% single-family homes; Kiwassa N'hood House
- Burrard View VUFF the first opportunity for LFSAP implementation



- Report recommendations align with all four goals of the LFSAP
- 0.4% of Park Board land is dedicated to food and culture gardens
- 0.002% is dedicated to Indigenous-led gardens





2. Proposed Garden Locations

Two possible Food Forest sites,
northwest (NW) and southeast (SE):

- Both generally meet technical needs for a garden site
- SE site in an area with has higher informal recreational use than NW
- NW site has poor visual connection/poor access to washrooms and fieldhouse
- NW site slightly costlier to service due to water line need



NW and SE sites per Phase 2 Engagement Materials

Two phases of Park Board engagement:

Phase 1 (Early 2021)

Phase 2 (Fall 2021)

- Shape Your City webpage
- Online Survey
- On-site info session



Staff and VUFF Foundation members speaking with residents at Phase 2 on-site info session (November, 2021)

The proposed project aims to **provide services to urban Indigenous people, equity-deserving residents** (VanPlay, LFSAP)

Staff did outreach with Indigenous-led and serving organizations, and with affected communities historically underrepresented in such processes. Activities included:

- Paper surveys, handbills and Shape Your City QR codes to Urban Native Youth Association, Vcr Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Kiwassa NH, local libraries and community centres
- Ensuring the survey was low-barrier and did not require pre-registration

Burrard View Community Garden



Share your ideas about a proposed community garden in Burrard View Park.

About this project

In April 2020, the [Vancouver Urban Food Forest Foundation \(VUFFF\)](#) reached out to us (the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation) to request an area of park space in the Hastings-Sunrise area for growing local food.

[Shape Your City project page](#)



Staff communicated the same opportunities for engagement to the **general public** in the following ways:

- Six onsite informational signs
- Email notifications to registered speakers from the March 2021 board meeting and anyone who emailed staff
- Promotion on the Shape Your City page and through Park Board social media channels



Six of these signs were posted in the park during Phase 2 of engagement.

Public Engagement Phase 2 Goals

- Help identify a location for the food forest in Burrard View Park (per the Board's referral).
- Share site options and communicate the implications, opportunities and trade-offs of each.
- Understand the needs and positions of equity-denied and Indigenous residents in relation to this project.
- Understand community needs and values about Burrard View Park and how each site option might impact park use and the success of the food forest



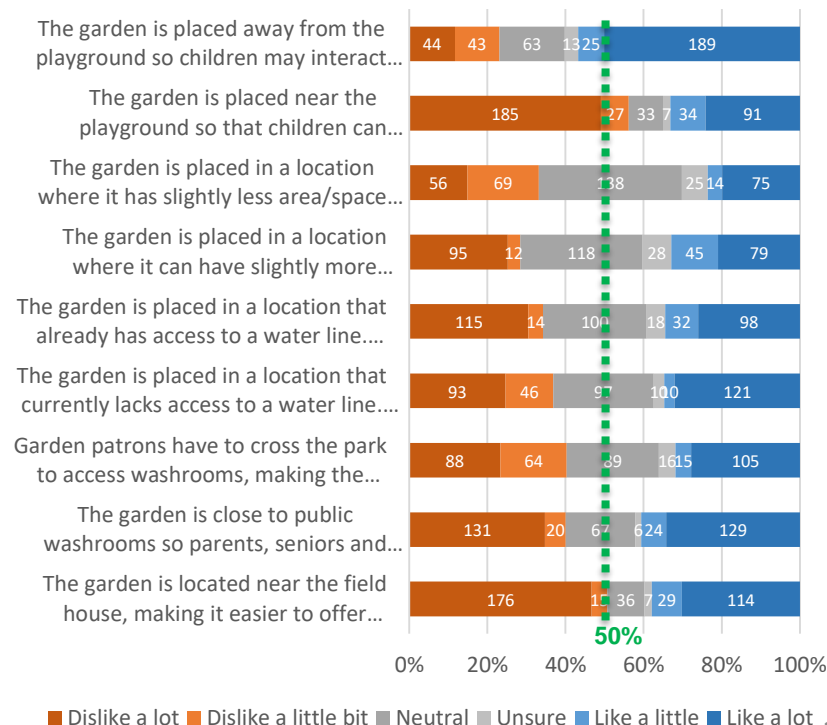
One of the signs at Phase 2 on-site info session shared the engagement goals.

- **Meetings**
 - with stakeholders (2 – Burrardview Community Association; on-site info session)
 - with Cottage Hospice official (1)
- **Survey** (377 responses)
- **Shape your city** project page (17 queries)
- **Emails** (16)
- **Other communications:** onsite signage, handbills and posters, letters, email and phone correspondence with BCA since report completion
- **Meetings with proponent** (VUFF Foundation) (4)

- Supportive letters cite goals of community building, Indigenous food sovereignty, equity, and intergenerational / intercultural knowledge sharing. (via letters from 7 organizations that serve equity-denied, low-income and/or Indigenous people)
- Conditional support from Burrardview Community Association (BCA), voicing support for the NW option, opposition to the SE option, and displeasure with the engagement process (via letter from BCA)
- BCA letter expressed concern about potential loss of flat, un-programmed space in SE option that is valued by the community for informal play and socializing.
- 12 emails were critical of survey design and/or engagement process generally

- A survey question presented **potential outcomes for the Food Forest in the park**, and asked whether each was liked or disliked
- For most of the outcomes, the line at 50% of the respondents falls within the neutral (grey) zone
- Suggests no clear consensus preferring the NW vs. SE site option

When it comes to the following scenarios, what outcomes do you like and dislike?



- A survey question asked **how park experience might be affected if either site option included a Food Forest**; responses showed no clear consensus
- Survey provided opportunity to provide custom text responses; these were variable and yielded little new information.
- Respondents generally agreed SE section of the park is cherished community amenity, but there was no consensus whether adding the Food Forest would detract or add to SE section's value.

Staff received feedback from some residents contending the survey favoured the SE option

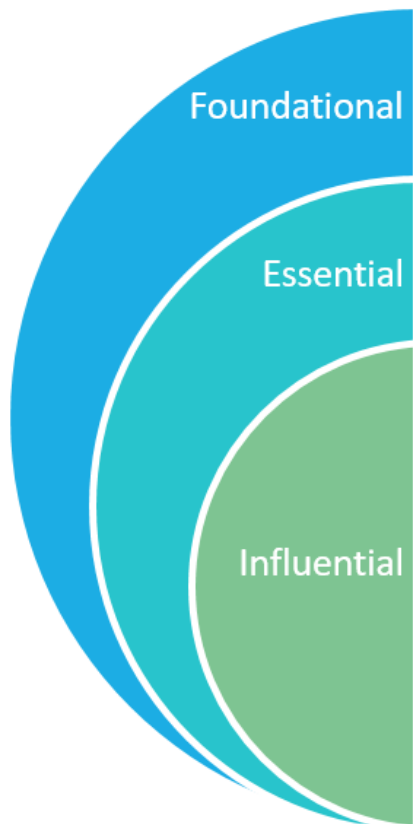
- Staff have attempted to represent the real differences between the NW and SE options, (e.g. proximity to washrooms/fieldhouse) and to ask respondents' opinions
- Text fields available in survey giving respondents ability to provide open commentary for or against either site option
- Survey does not offer a representative sample; it is a self-selecting tool that offers one way to encourage participation in civic engagement.

At times, behaviour of some participants went beyond advocacy and included promoting inaccurate information and disrespectful communications. These actions included:

- Postering on PB signs with a QR code to an alternative non-PB survey.
- Letters, emails, website communications and in-park signage that:
 - instructed residents to indicate preference for NW site in survey responses;
 - disputed Park Board communications regarding technical analyses of the sites, such as water connections or slope.
- Disrespectful communications with staff and VUFF Foundation members at the on-site info session, including raised voices and uncivil language.



3. Recommended Option



Policy: PB commitments, VanPlay, LFSAP

- Create and support equitable, accessible food assets
- Centre decolonization & Indigenous ways
- VanPlay and LFSAP each developed based on their own rigorous processes

Technical considerations

- Sun, water, accessibility, existing uses, programming space

Public input

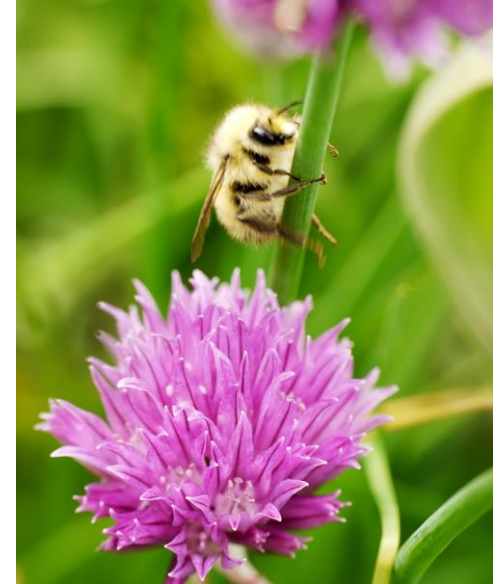
- Letters of support and opposition
- Individual correspondence by
 - Email
 - Stakeholder meetings
 - Board meeting
 - Public event
- Survey data

- Influential **Public input** yielded no consensus on either site
- Essential **Technical considerations** for food forest are met at either site
- Foundational **Policy** (VanPlay, LFSAP) **points to the SE site** as best serving policy goals, including
 - Improve equity in PB food assets, services, and programs
 - Involve equity-deserving groups traditionally not part of planning processes
 - Supporting efforts of Indigenous community members to grow medicinal food/plants
 - Strengthen food partnerships and collaboration to support a decolonized, sustainable and just food economy

Staff recommend the SE site option as the general location for the Food Forest, subject to archeological site investigation localized to the recommended SE site.

Food Forest is more likely to be successful at SE site from policy, programming and accessibility perspectives:

- Opportunity for collaborative, multigenerational programming connections with fieldhouse/playground
- Easy visual connection to and supervision of children in playground / washrooms for parents in food forest



5. Recommendation

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the southeast site option, as outlined in this report, for the general location of the proposed Vancouver Urban Food Forest in Burrard View Park, with the exact siting to be determined by the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, subject to an archaeological assessment.
- B. THAT, subject to approval of Recommendation A, the Vancouver Park Board authorize the General Manager to approve a 5-year licence agreement with the Vancouver Urban Food Forest Foundation to operate the community garden.

5. Recommendation – Final as Amended



- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the southeast site option, as outlined in this report, for the general location of the proposed Vancouver Urban Food Forest in Burrard View Park, with the exact siting, to be determined by the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, subject to an archaeological assessment.
- B. THAT, subject to approval of Recommendation A, the Vancouver Park Board authorize the General Manager to approve a 5-year licence agreement with the Vancouver Urban Food Forest Foundation to operate the community garden.
- C. THAT should the archeological assessment find any evidence at all of either a sacred site, or any evidence of unmarked graves, that the project is halted until these issues are fully dealt with.

