



March 16, 2022

**TO:** Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
**FROM:** General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Art Phillips Park Concept Design

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## RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the proposed concept design for Art Phillips Park as outlined in this report.

## REPORT SUMMARY

As part of TransLink's Burrard Station Upgrade Project, which is partially located in Art Phillips Park, a new plaza area to the southeast portion of the Park Site will be constructed. The concept design is developed with input from Park Board staff and will be constructed by TransLink. The purpose of this report is to share details of the proposed concept and results of the public engagement process, and to seek a Board decision on the proposed park concept design to allow TransLink to proceed with detailed design followed by park construction.

## BOARD AUTHORITY, POLICY, PREVIOUS DECISIONS/UPDATES

As per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over all areas designated as permanent and temporary parks in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements or major changes that occur within those parks.

The Board shall have the custody, care and management to the extent prescribed by Council of such other areas belonging to or held by the City as Council may from time to time determine.

On October 19, 2020, the Park Board approved the [VanPlay Framework](#), for Vancouver's [Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan](#). VanPlay sets priorities and provides tools and policies to support the pursuit of equity, connectivity and access to parks and recreation for all. This project aligns with VanPlay's goals to grow and renew assets (Goal 1), prioritize delivery of resources (Goal 3), and foster safety and welcome (Goal 8).

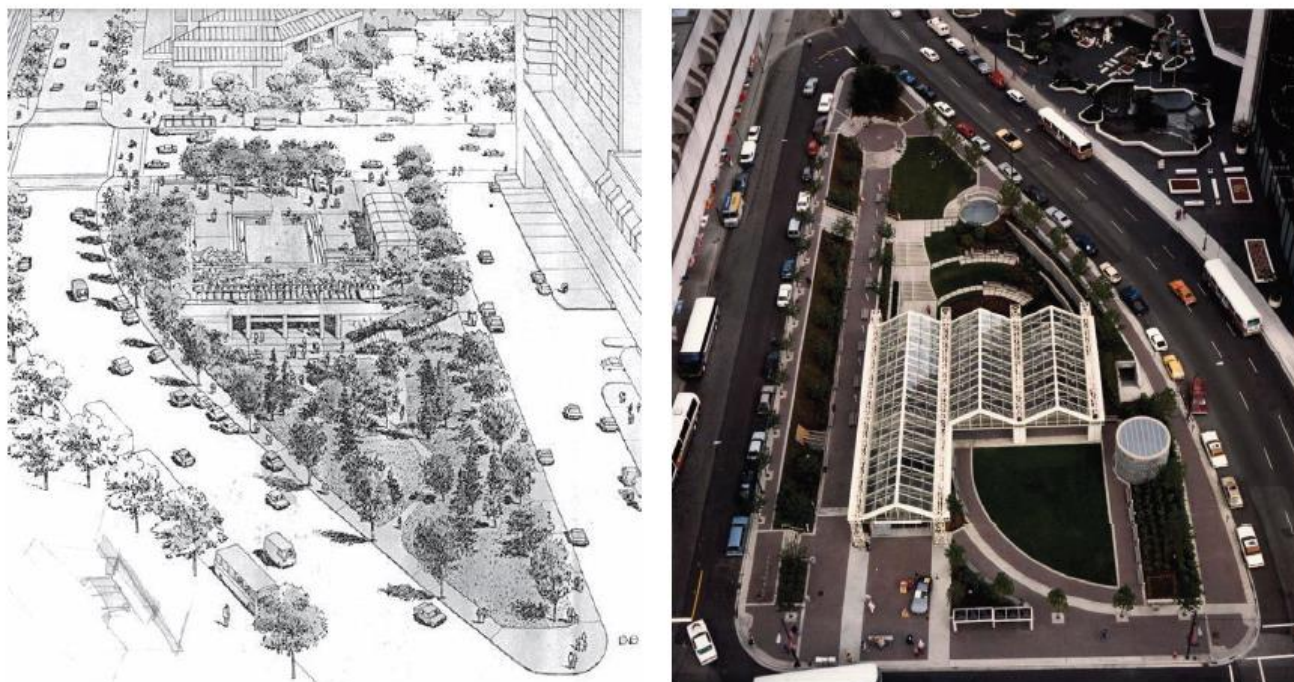
[Parks Washroom Strategy](#) (2020): Guides the planning, building, and operation of park washrooms to enhance the park experience for all, with an understanding that washrooms are an essential public service and that everyone is entitled to safe, clean, and accessible washrooms.

## BACKGROUND

### Art Phillips Park

Originally named Discovery Square, Art Phillips Park was purchased by the City in 1974 for the purpose of providing park space and supporting transit needs. Using funds raised by Art Phillips, Mayor of Vancouver at that time, which were matched by the City, the land previously used for a car dealership was purchased for \$2.5 million with the intention to create a park named Discovery Square. The park was built in 1979 and Burrard Station was opened within the park in 1985 as

part of the Expo Line construction. Figure 1 below shows the bird's-eye view of the Art Phillips Park, comparing artist's concept illustration before the construction and the aerial photo after completion of the station.



**Figure 1:** Art Phillips Park - Burrard Skytrain Station circa 1986. Source: TransLink

The station, which is owned by the Province through the BC Transportation Financing Authority (BCTFA) and operated by TransLink, is partially located within City of Vancouver street rights-of-way, with some portions of the station located within Art Phillips Park.

Despite the SkyTrain not coming to fruition until a decade later, Discovery Square Park was designed with the future rapid transit line in mind. Since its inception, the intention and vision for Discovery Square was for the park to co-exist with a transit station.

The park was renamed to Art Phillips Park in 2013 to commemorate the contribution that Mayor Art Phillips has made to the quality of life in Vancouver.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Burrard Station Upgrades**

TransLink has been implementing upgrades and station expansions as part of the Expo and Millennium Line Upgrade Program (EMUP), which have included recent station upgrades at Main Street-Science World, Commercial-Broadway and Joyce-Collingwood Stations. Burrard Station currently represents a significant capacity constraint within the system. The upgrade will enable Burrard Station to accommodate additional trains that have been ordered by TransLink, which will be running on the Expo Line in the future.

In 2018, TransLink approached the City of Vancouver through the City's Rapid Transit Office (RTO) with a proposal to upgrade Burrard Station. Renderings of the revised station entry are presented in Figure 2 and a bird's-eye perspective of the station perspective is shown in Figure 3

below. The RTO has been leading the review of TransLink’s proposed design and facilitating discussions between TransLink, City and Park Board staff. The station upgrades, which when complete will almost double pre-COVID-19 passenger capacity, are expected to start in 2022 and take approximately two years to complete.



**Figure 2:** Art Phillips Park – Station Entry. Source: TransLink



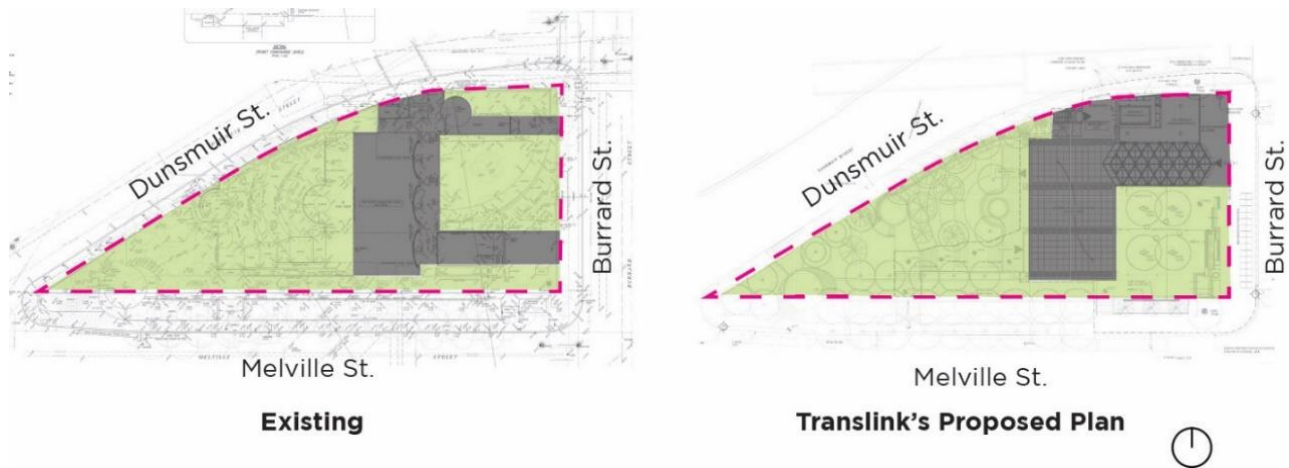
**Figure 3:** Art Phillips Park - Station Perspective. Source: TransLink

The upgrade will require an expansion of the station footprint both at the surface and below grade and will result in a relocation of the station entry on Burrard Street and changes to the eastern portion of Art Phillips Park

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Art Phillips Park Re-Design

TransLink's proposed Burrard Station Upgrade project relocates the existing station entry on Burrard Street at the southern portion of the site near Melville Street to the North, closer to Dunsmuir Street. The existing open space between the escalators and the elevator access on Burrard, a grassy area with public art, will be relocated to the southeast corner of the park where the current station entry sits. The comparison of the existing plan and TransLink's proposed plan are shown in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4:** Art Phillips Park - Park space (green) and above grade station (grey), before and after upgrades

### Concept Design

In collaboration with TransLink and their consultant team, Park Board and City's Rapid Transit Office staff developed a concept design for the new public space in the southeast corner, incorporating public engagement and stakeholder engagement results. The design is supported by the staff and provides the needs of park users.

Staff developed high level design guidelines for the concept design:

- extending the popular row of cherry trees through the park to Burrard Street;
- making improvements to site accessibility;
- adding seating to support park and transit users; and
- creating open space to support site programming.

The proposed concept plan for the Art Phillips Park Plaza is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

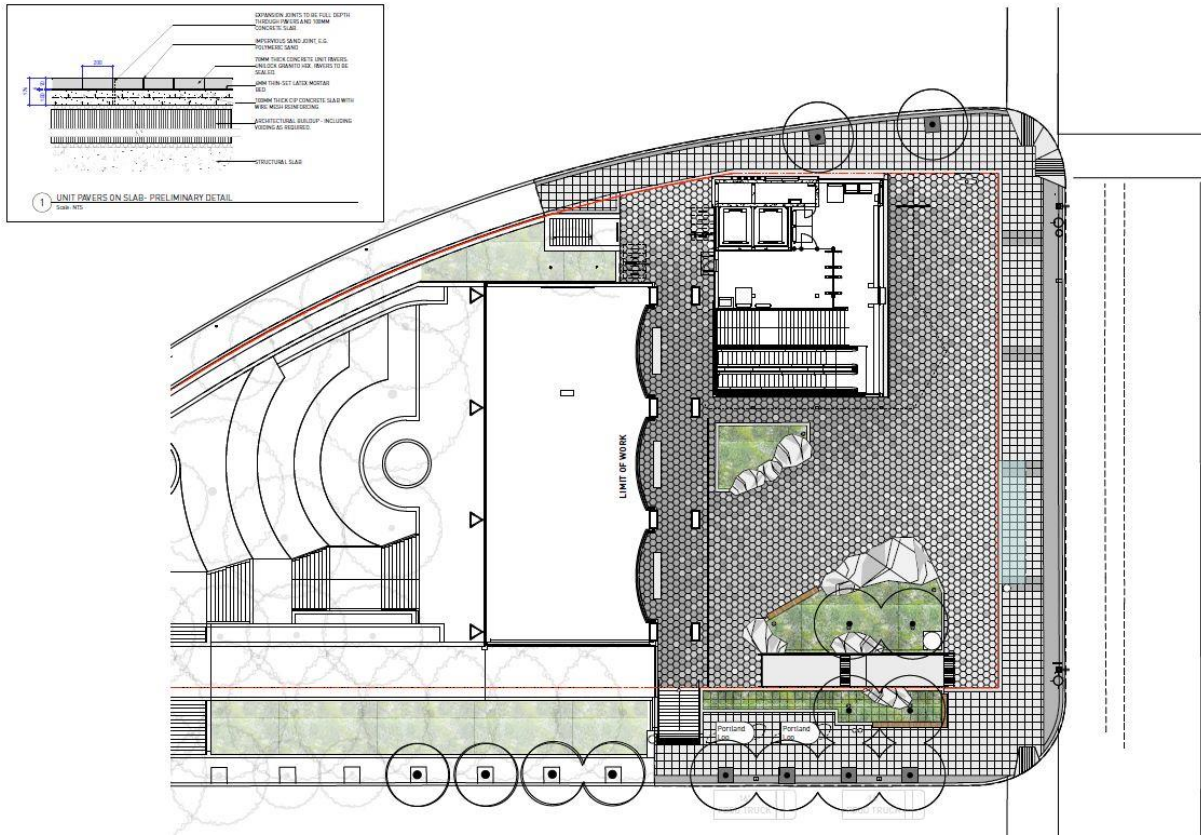


Figure 5: Art Phillips Park – Proposed concept plan. Source: TransLink

Upon Board approval, TransLink and their consultant team will advance the detailed design of the park, with the renewed portion of the park to be constructed by TransLink as part of the station upgrades and will be coordinated by staff to meet the needs and expectations of the Park Board.

### Washrooms

As compensation for lost public access to Art Phillips Park during the construction of the station upgrades, TransLink was asked to consider the addition of public washrooms within the redesigned park area to support the recently adopted [Parks Washroom Strategy](#). TransLink responded to the request indicating they would support the Park Board’s motion by adding two (2) stand-alone universally accessible prefabricated single user washroom units within the redesigned park area, on the condition that the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the washrooms are the responsibility of the Park Board. Figure 6 below shows the illustration of the two washrooms looking from the Melville Street and Figure 7 shows the view looking East at Cherry tree walk.

The Parks Washroom Strategy identifies the approximate cost of operating and maintaining a washroom facility as \$25,000/year. It is anticipated that the washrooms at Art Phillips Park will have very high utilization, which will likely increase the base level operating and maintenance costs. Park Board, the City, and TransLink staff will continue to review the design of the eastern portion of the park to ensure the new washrooms meet guidelines for accessibility, safety, and cleanliness, as outlined in the Parks Washroom Strategy, as well as limit overall impact to the usability and operation of the park.



**Figure 6:** Art Phillips Park – View at Melville Street with washrooms. Source: TransLink



**Figure 7:** Art Phillips Park – Cherry walk along Melville Street looking Southeast. Source: TransLink

### **Impacts and Park Access**

Pending TransLink's project initiation, construction of the Burrard Station upgrades are expected to start in 2022 and take approximately two (2) years to complete. During this time, construction will render the entire park site inaccessible to the public due to a combination of construction staging, lost access points, and safety concerns. Staff continue to work with the BCFTA and TransLink to identify opportunities to manage the construction process to limit impacts to park assets, amenities, and trees, in addition to identifying possible improvements within the remainder of the park space.

According to the concept design, approximately eighteen (18) trees are being removed; all of these trees are located on the eastern portion of the site near the station entry and eleven (11) trees are listed as either poor condition or already dead in a recent arborist's report. The redesign of the park includes fourteen (14) replacement trees, planted in large soil volumes to support healthy canopy development, to address some of the overall canopy loss, as well as to address space requirement for park and transit users, however the station expansion limits available space for replacement trees.

### **Public and Stakeholder Engagement**

A Development Permit for the at-grade portion of the station was submitted through the Development planning office. Development permits require public notification to ensure the public and surrounding community are aware of and have an opportunity to comment on the development proposal. For the Burrard Station Upgrades, public notification included a Shape Your City page that presented the design and offered the public opportunities to comment. This process was supported by site signage and the delivery of paper notifications to surrounding businesses and residents.

The response via Shape Your City on the proposed plaza design included keeping allée of cherry trees, securing green space, improving feelings of safety, seeking opportunities for public art and decluttering the space to meet needs of park users.

Additionally, Park Board staff conducted individual engagement with relevant stakeholders including Cherry Blossom Festival, Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association and BC Building Trades Council. The most notable requests were to maintain canopy of cherry trees as one of the most popular cherry blossom viewing sites in the city and to accommodate future programming needs at the plaza.

The items identified through public engagement and stakeholder discussions are included in the concept design to ensure that the renewed park space addresses public space requirements, safety concerns, accessibility, and supports programming needs.

Figure 8 below plaza perspective looking South.



**Figure 8:** Art Phillips Park – Plaza perspective looking South. Source: TransLink

### **Public Art**

TransLink is developing an opportunity for three public art pieces by the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh artists within the new station building. Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) also expressed interest in working together with Park Board staff to identify public art opportunities through stakeholder engagement. Subject to funding availability, input from the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and recommendations of the cultural context report, Park Board staff will pursue a public art opportunity at the plaza.

### **Park Maintenance and Operations**

Burrard Station and Art Phillips Park were designed to function in tandem, addressing both public space needs and supporting access to rapid transit. At present there is no clear delineation of the station boundaries and the park boundaries. As a result of the proposed changes to the station, staff are, through the negotiation of the terms relating to shared operations and maintenance, clarifying boundaries and responsibilities related to day-to-day care and maintenance of the space. The terms will outline the new park space including two (2) washrooms, which will be maintained by Park Board, as well as clarify the Park Board's ability to program the park and enforce by-laws. The Park Board General Manager is responsible for approving maintenance and operations terms and conditions for the park.

### **Financial Implications**

Design and construction costs for the redesigned park area are being provided by TransLink. Design development of the new park area includes a review to ensure maintenance and operating costs of the new space do not exceed the existing funding requirements to maintain the existing



park space. In addition, staff are reviewing the draft licence agreement in conjunction with the new station layout to identify other maintenance efficiencies or overlaps in duties and care.

TransLink has also committed to the installation of washroom units in the southeast portion of the park to support ongoing access to public washrooms. The cost of maintenance and operations of the washrooms units are to be borne by the Park Board. The Park Washroom Strategy identifies the ongoing cost of maintaining this type of facility to be estimated \$25,000 per year, which will be requested as part of the ongoing cost of capital budget process.

Due to the central location Art Phillips Park and the current and anticipated high utilization, the park would benefit from onsite programming. Park Board staff from Decolonization, Arts and Culture, Park Planning, and Development will work with Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association for the future opportunities.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Subject to the Board's decision on the recommendation outlined in this report, detail design for the plaza space will commence. Currently, the TransLink led station upgrades are expected to begin in 2022. The renewed park space in the southeast corner will be constructed prior to completion of the station upgrades and open for public use in conjunction with the reopening of Burrard Station. TransLink is working to finalize the construction schedule and will be providing more information to City and Park staff.

## **CONCLUSION**

The concept design for the Art Phillips Park aligns with the Park Board's policy objectives including: renewal of park spaces to address growth, accessibility and changing needs, and the addition of public washrooms to a busy park.

General Manager's Office  
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
Vancouver, BC

Prepared by:  
Hanako Amaya, Landscape Architect I – Park Planning – Park Development

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