



Report Date: July 8, 2026

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-30

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TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: Director, Park Planning and Development
SUBJECT: BC Hydro Rights-of-Way in Nelson Park - Agreements Amendments

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the Vancouver Park Board authorize the Director of Real Estate Services to execute those amendments and related agreements with BC Hydro, as outlined in this report (the "Nelson Park Hydro Amending Agreements"), for 1030 Bute Street, legally described as: PID 007-036-817, Lot B Block 22 District Lot 185 Plan 19348, related to the West End Substation Project (the "Project") on the terms and conditions outlined in this report and to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Real Estate, Environment & Facilities Management, the General Manager of Parks & Recreation, and the Director of Legal Services.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

This report seeks a decision to approve the changes to current land use agreements across Nelson Park as requested by BC Hydro for the construction of a new electrical substation and new elementary school on the Lord Roberts Elementary School Annex property prior to the onset of construction, which is targeted to begin in the fall of 2026. The changes are a result of detailed design and construction planning carried out by BC Hydro in collaboration with Park Board staff since 2022.

These changes, including (1) the granting of a new permanent Drainage Statutory Right of Way (SRW) over a 358.6m² portion of Nelson Park for drainage purposes, (2) permission to temporarily locate a crane within Nelson Park during construction, and (3) an expansion of the temporary Safety Works Area during construction required to support BC Hydro in completing the proposed West End Substation (the "Project") to be constructed beneath the Vancouver School Board's (VSB) Lord Roberts Annex at 1150 Nelson Street.

Real Estate Services, in consultation with Park Board Staff, have undertaken negotiations with BC Hydro regarding a payment that would fairly compensate the City for the rights granted and the impact to the park. Details of all financial negotiations are confidential. Staff have worked with BC Hydro to develop a compensation package that reflects the cost of the disruption to the users of Nelson Park and the need to restore the park once the work is complete. The information will be made public once all negotiations are complete.

BOARD AUTHORITY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

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, and shall have the

custody, care and management of other areas as determined by Council. Nelson Park has not been designated as a Permanent Park. The City is the registered owner of the land comprising the park and owns adjacent streets; therefore, the City will be required to enter into or modify any leases, licenses, or statutory rights-of-way that may be required for the proposed substation and the underground high-voltage transmission lines. As the park is under the custody, care and management of the Park Board, approvals from both elected bodies are warranted.

On [February 1, 2019](#) a Board memo provided an update that, prior to a Board decision on BC Hydro's request for infrastructure through the park to service a proposed new electrical substation and proposed new elementary school on Vancouver School Board's Lord Roberts School Annex adjacent to Nelson Park, Park Board staff would commission a "Park Impact and Mitigation Study" to better understand the impacts of the substation and cabling on the park and park users during the site's construction period and ongoing operation. This study was paired with a public consultation process seeking feedback on the study and level of public support for the project.

On [March 11, 2019](#), the Board received a presentation titled BC Hydro Rights-of-Way Request in Nelson Park, providing an overview of the BC Hydro project, the rights-of-way request, and information on the Park Board staff led impact study and engagement.

On [May 25, 2020](#), the Board received a presentation on the results of impacts and engagement study, which highlighted short term impacts such as noise and dust during construction, mid-term impacts such as tree removals, and long term/indefinite impacts such as legal encumbrances to the park and concerns related to Electro Magnetic Fields around electrical substations.

On [February 7, 2022](#) the report titled BC Hydro Request for Rights-of-Way in Nelson Park – Agreements was presented to the Board for decision. The Board authorized Real Estate Services to execute multiple land use agreements with BC Hydro, which included rights-of-way, construction access and a compensation funding package for the Park Board, allowing for park improvements following the completion of the school and substation.

On [May 7, 2026](#) the memo titled Lord Roberts Annex School-BC Hydro Substation and Coal Harbour Park Playground Update was provided to the Board for recent updates on the substation and school project and work in Coal Harbour Park that supports the new Seaside Elementary School.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

In February 2022, after Park Board approvals, City Council approved Report RTS 14765, authorizing the Director of Real Estate Services to negotiate and execute multiple land use agreements with BC Hydro to facilitate the construction and operation of the Project. This Project will deliver critical West End electrical infrastructure and a brand-new elementary school. While it permanently alters the park, these community impacts are offset through a financial compensation package.

The approved land use agreements collectively the "Nelson Park Hydro Agreements", include the following:

- Agreement to Acquire Rights
- Two Statutory Rights of Way ("SRW")

- Section 219 Restrictive Covenant
- Access Easement
- Release/Modification of City SRW
- SRW Construction License
- Substation Construction Licence Agreement

In late 2025, BC Hydro approached the Park Board with proposed revisions to the design of the project due to the need for Zero-Lot Line construction within the Vancouver School Board property, which will contain the new substation and elementary school, and related construction access along the Nelson Park property boundary. These revisions result in the need to amend the existing agreements.

DISCUSSION

BC Hydro has recently identified several refinements to their construction methodology that require additional temporary access and permanent encumbrances within Nelson Park driven by safety, constructability, and operational requirements. Below is a summary of the proposed changes. Refer to Figures 1.1 for 2022 Previous agreed proposed safety buffer and fencing plan and Figure 1.2 for 2026 Proposed Revisions to the safety buffer and fencing plan.

1. Drainage SRW

BC Hydro is proposing Zero-Lot Line construction, whereby below-grade structural walls would be constructed directly up to the VSB property line. Refer to Figure 1.2 for location of Drainage SRW. The impacts of this approach to construction are as follows:

- Addresses substation facility space constraints and improves operational and worker safety.
- Requires 2.5m wide SRW to accommodate additional underground drainage infrastructure associated with the substation within park lands. A total area of 358.6m².
- Infrastructure remains in place following construction at a depth below 1.5m from the surface, as is typical practice for zero lot line construction.
- The Drainage SRW constrains future underground development within the park, however at the surface, it will not prohibit landscape treatments including tree planting.

2. Crane Area

BC Hydro is also requesting temporary access rights within the park be expanded to accommodate an additional construction crane adjacent to the property line. Refer to Figure 1.2 for location of Crane Area. The impacts of the crane are as follows:

- Improves construction safety and schedule efficiency.
- Increase of 59m² to the temporary construction footprint.
- A portion of the crane's 33m deep concrete foundation would remain in place following construction, at a depth below 1.5m from the surface.
- Remaining foundation will not prohibit landscape treatments including tree planting, however, future deep excavation or park redevelopment activities in the area may incur additional costs if removal of the remaining foundation components is required.

- BC Hydro has provided assurances that the proposed crane location will not impact use of the adjacent playground within the park during construction.

3. Additional Safety Works Area

Implementation of the Zero-Lot Line construction methodology will require shifting and the construction fencing and Safety Works Area into the park. Some additional area beyond the typical 5m wide works area will also be used by BC Hydro. Refer to Figure 1.2 for Additional Safety Works Area. Impacts of the additional works area are as follows:

- Addresses operational worker and park user safety.
- Increase of 171.1m² of the temporary construction footprint.
- Temporary impacts to community garden and public washroom. Refer to 'Other Considerations' section below for more information on temporary impacts.

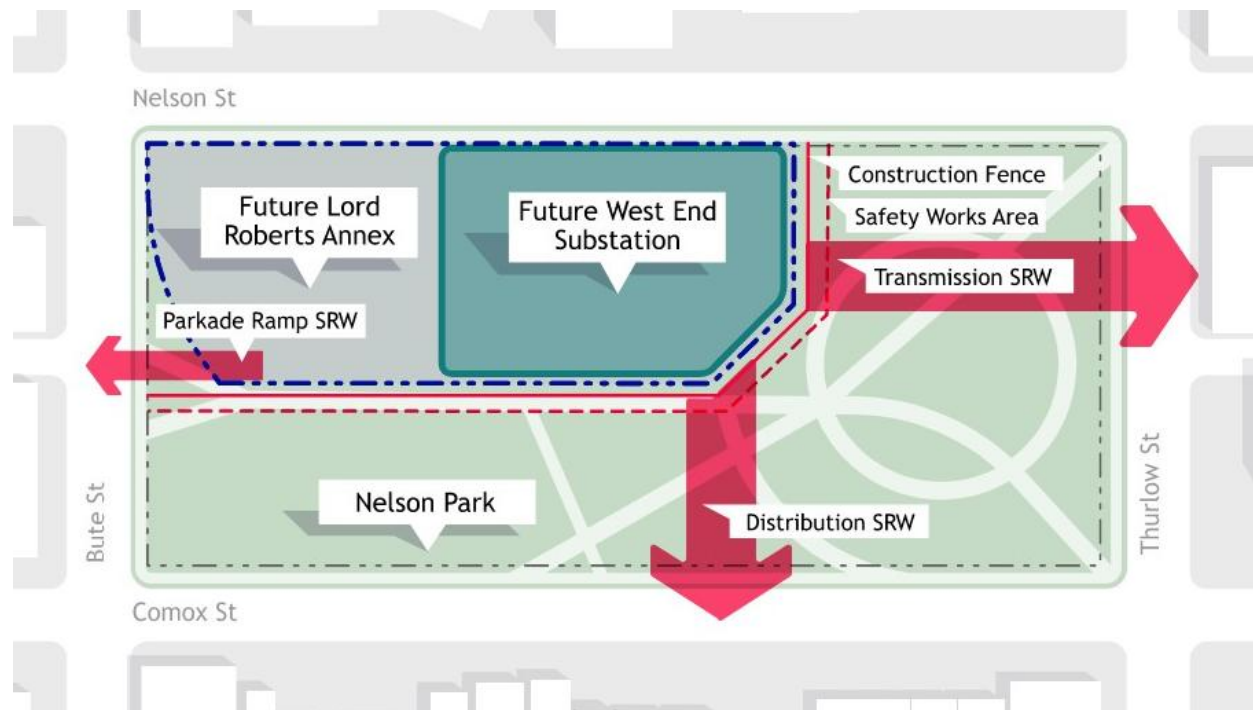


Figure 1.1: 2022 Previous agreed proposed safety buffer and fencing plan

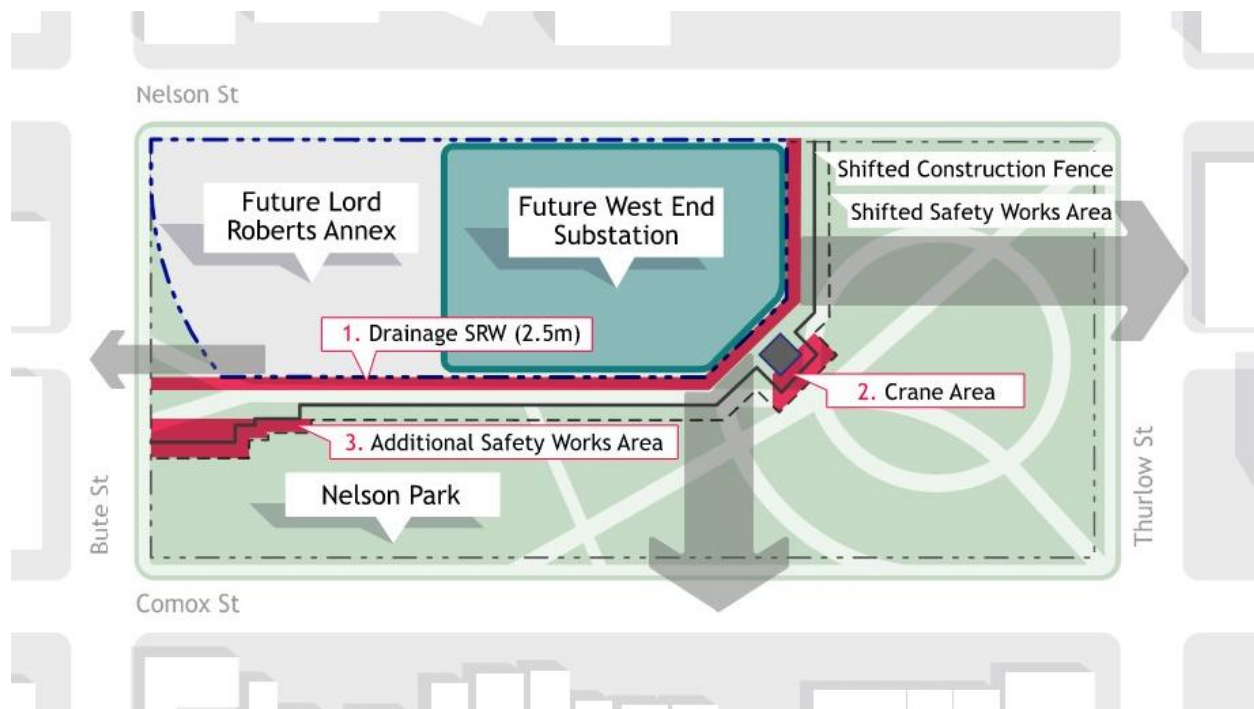


Figure 1.2: 2026 Proposed Revisions to the safety buffer and fencing plan

Agreement Amendments

The Table below provides a description of the required amendments to the previously executed agreements related to the Project.

Agreement	Change
- Agreement to Acquire Rights (AtAR)	Amendments to the AtAR include: - An additional Drainage SRW (and the associated compensation). - An amendment of the Substation Construction License (with associated compensation).
- Grant of the new Drainage SRW with Section 219 Covenant	An additional SRW and Section 219 Covenant to permit permanent drainage and backfill materials and a shoring wall, to encroach onto City-owned lands within Nelson Park.
- Substation Construction License	The Substation Construction Licence grants BC Hydro temporary rights, for the duration of the construction term, to install safety hoarding, fencing, shoring and anchor rods, and to erect a crane. Amendments to the Substation Construction Licence include: - Safety Works Area expanded and relocated to the area south and east of the Drainage SRW. - Crane located within the boundary of Nelson Park. - Crane foundation footing in Nelson Park will be removed to a depth of 1.5m upon completion.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Real Estate Services, in consultation with Park Board Staff, have worked with BC Hydro to develop a compensation package that reflects the cost of the disruption to the users of Nelson Park and the need to restore the park once the work is complete. Details of all financial negotiations as they are in progress are confidential. The information will be made public once all negotiations are complete.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

BC Hydro will be responsible for restoring impacted areas of the park to a condition acceptable to Park Board. The additional encumbrances will result in some temporary implications for park users. BC Hydro will support interim accommodations as follows:

- Public Washroom: The Project safety fencing will impede access to the public washroom currently located in Nelson Park. BC Hydro has agreed to provide an alternative temporary public washroom facility for the duration of the Project.
- Interim Community Gardens: The Project requires that some community gardens will be removed temporarily. Park Board staff will work with gardeners to relocate impacted gardens into a condensed interim location between the dog park and water feature, and BC Hydro has offered the community garden organization some additional support. The restoration design for the park will include restored space for the community gardens in Nelson Park upon completion of the Project.
- Off Leash Dog Area: The off leash dog area will remain unimpacted. Minor adjustment to the location of the operations vehicular access gate is required to accommodate the Project's use of Bute Street. BC Hydro has agreed to reconstruct the gate to Park Board standards.

BC Hydro and Park Board staff have developed a communications protocol to ensure the public remains informed on the Project, and questions are directed to the appropriate organization for response. Park Board staff will plan future engagement with the public about the restoration design for the park towards the end of the substation construction period.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Advancement of any work related to the Project in Nelson Park is subject to Council and Park Board approval of the proposed changes to the Nelson Park Hydro Agreements and is time sensitive given the target for substation construction initiation in the fall of 2026.

The overall public benefits of the project outside the boundaries of the park should be considered, as the substation will provide resilient power infrastructure for residents and businesses in a growing downtown and BC Hydro has provided funding to support the growth of schools in the West End and downtown Vancouver. The construction impacts will result in short-term loss of access to portions of the park and will place permanent limitations on the Park Board's ability to redesign portions of the park in the future. For this Park Board will receive compensation. The Park Board General Manager recommends approval of the changes to the Agreements.

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