



May 14, 2018

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Dave Hutch
Manager, Planning and Research

SUBJECT : **Update on Heather Lands Policy Statement**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the Heather Lands Policy Statement which is being considered by City Council the week of May 14th, 2018.

The development of Policy Statements is led by the City of Vancouver Planning Department, with integral involvement from staff from other City Departments and from the Park Board. Park Board staff are actively involved in the City's technical planning teams and have played a key role in drafting this Policy Statement.

If adopted, Policy Statements guide any future rezoning of a site. While broad directions are confirmed in the Policy Statement, refinement of a proposal will occur in the rezoning stage.

Background

The Heather Lands (previously referred to as the RCMP Fairmont Lands) comprise 8.5-hectares (21-acres) of land located between 33rd Avenue and 37th Avenue at Heather Street. The City launched a comprehensive planning program in October 2016 to create a policy statement to guide future redevelopment (<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/heather-street-lands-planning-program.aspx>). The program is being developed at the request of the Heather Lands owners: Canada Lands Company and the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations (MST) Partnership. The redevelopment of the Heather Lands represents a unique opportunity to advance the principles of reconciliation in the City of Vancouver.

With Park Board staff input, the planning program investigated potential public park and/or open space to respond to the following:

- proposed development densities;
- surrounding context;
- opportunities to enhance park and recreation connectivity (e.g. greenways) within and through the site and to adjacent parks;
- potential ecological, biodiversity and tree canopy enhancements, and
- opportunities to reflect the cultures of the MST.

Planning for Heather Lands considers the long-term prosperity of the MST Nations members. The MST Partnership has stated an interest in holding the lands in perpetuity. As a Government-to-Government relationship, the City of Vancouver will work with the MST Partnership and CLC to secure community amenities (parks and open spaces, cultural centre, childcare centre and affordable housing) in perpetuity without requiring dedication to the City.



This ownership structure will be unique for major project sites. The legal mechanisms to secure the public interest will be resolved through the rezoning process.

Key Aspects of the Policy Statement Related to the Park Board

The plan (Figure 1) includes the following policy provisions:

- The Heather Lands will provide a new park (minimum of 0.8ha / 2.0ac) within an open space network of approximately 1.6ha/4.0ac configured to provide flexibility for a variety of park programming.
- It is proposed that the MST Partnership will retain ownership of the entirety of the site (excluding road rights of way); the details to secure public access and define operating agreements with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation on the proposed park will be determined at the time of rezoning.
- The new park and open space will be configured in response to the site's natural features and characteristics by protecting high value trees and working with the site's topography and natural hydrology. This results in a primary north-south open space corridor and park.
- Consistent with the Park Board's Biodiversity Strategy, the Heather Lands also includes the creation of a strong, more fine-grained, east-west open space network through the site to reinforce the larger ecological network, linking to off-site natural spaces including Oak Meadows Park, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Queen Elizabeth Park. This is achieved on a new 35th avenue, which will be designed as a pollinator corridor, as well as the exploration of a new connection between 35th and 37th avenues. This is further illustrated in Figure 2.
- The parks and open spaces will be designed to reflect MST values and culture, while welcoming people from all cultures to enjoy and reconnect with nature.

Upcoming Council Decision

The policy statement process is nearing its end, with a presentation to City Council scheduled for May 15th, 2018.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Hutch'.

Dave Hutch
Manager, Planning and Research

DH/KA

Copy to: PB Senior Management Team
PB Communications



Figure 1: Policy Statement illustrative concept

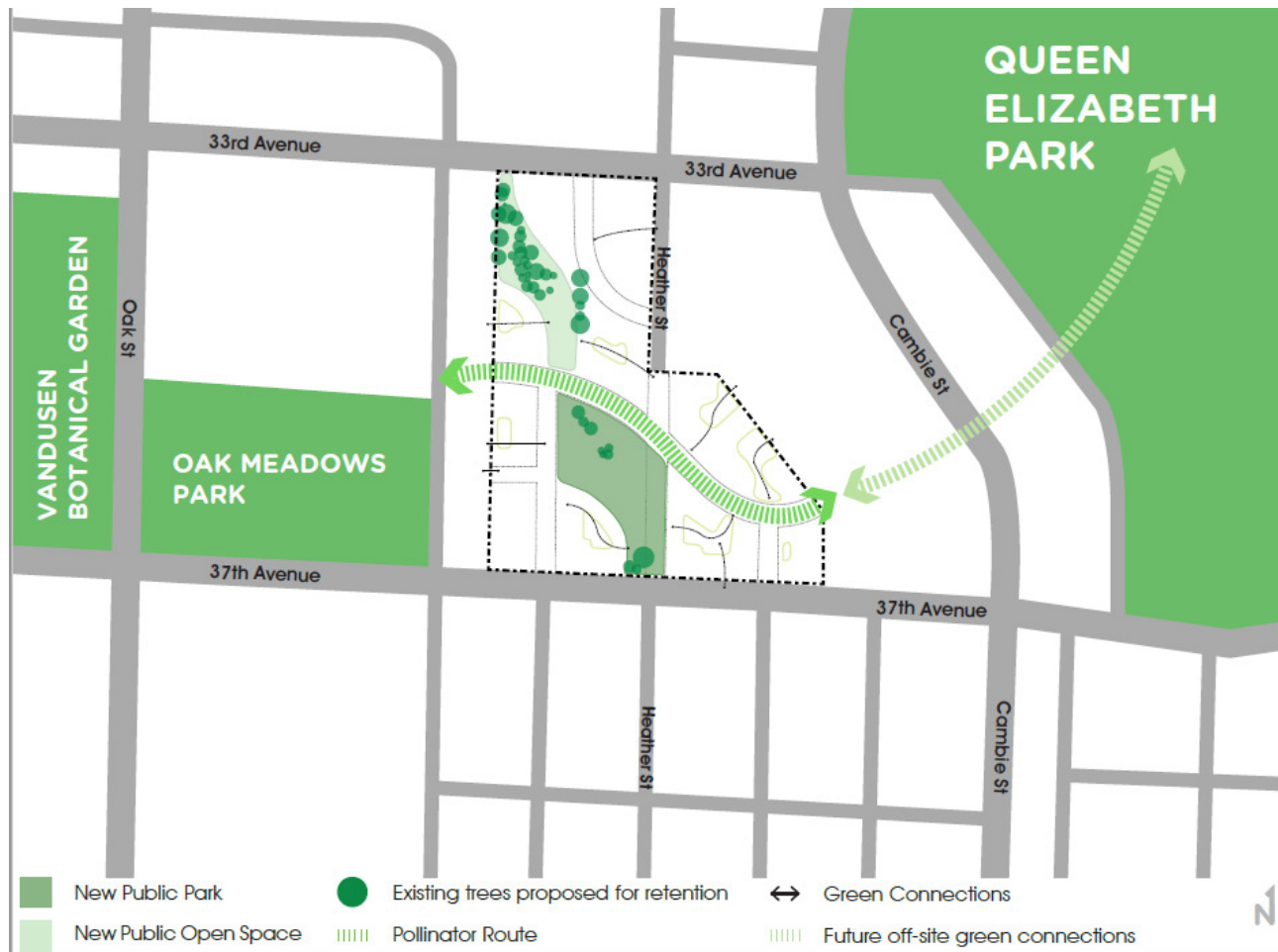


Figure 2: East - west connectivity to off-site parks