



March 17, 2022

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **John Hendry (Trout Lake) Park Renewal Plan Update - Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the development of the John Hendry Park Renewal Plan including: an overview of the recently concluded public engagement; information regarding the Cedar Cottage Garden Society request to locate their garden in the park; and when staff anticipate presenting the final proposed plan to the Board for review and consideration. It is worth noting that the project is now known as the John Hendry Park Renewal Plan rather than by its previous name, John Hendry Park Master Plan. This allows the project to more appropriately align with the Park Board's commitment to Reconciliation and Decolonization by reducing the use of colonial-based terminology.

Background

The John Hendry Park master planning process began in 2013, with public engagement held in 2013 and 2014, and a preliminary master plan developed in 2015. As outlined in a [June 2019 board memo](#), the project was paused in 2015 while staff developed a policy to guide the design and integration of dog off-leash areas across the city. The [People, Parks and Dogs Strategy](#) (PPDS), was approved by the Board in October 2017 and the John Hendry Park planning process re-started in 2019. Public engagement took place in fall 2019, and focused on the vision and principles guiding the development of the plan, reviewing and updating recommendations proposed in 2014, and seeking input on new recommendations.

In January 2020, a [board memo](#) provided an overview of the 2019 engagement activities along with an expectation that another round of engagement would occur in April 2020. However, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 temporarily postponed all engagement plans. By summer of 2021, once it was possible to safely conduct inclusive and meaningful engagement, staff began preparing for a final round of engagement to occur in fall 2021.

Fall 2021 Engagement

The final round of engagement on the John Hendry Park Renewal Plan occurred between November 23 and December 21. It included online stakeholder meetings, an open house in the park on November 27, and a Shape Your City survey. The engagement materials included an illustrated concept plan that identified 31 broad park improvement recommendations as well as the following 10 detailed recommendations:

- Cultural Focus Area
- Sports fields
- Flexible open spaces
- South Beach event area
- Possible Farmers Market relocation
- Trout Lake water quality and treatment
- Bicycle circulation
- Dog off-leash area
- Courts activity centre
- Victoria Drive community plaza



Of these 10 detailed recommendations, all but the Cultural Focus Area (see Appendix A) had been discussed during previous rounds of engagement. The Cultural Focus Area reflects the Park Board's ongoing and evolving commitment to Reconciliation and Decolonization, which until 2021, had not yet been fully integrated into the preliminary John Hendry Park Renewal Plan. The area would be co-designed with the local First Nations and Urban Indigenous Peoples to reflect Indigenous Peoples' values and programming needs. It represents a unique opportunity towards better understanding what it means to decolonize one of Vancouver's destination parks.

What was not illustrated in the recent John Hendry Park engagement materials was inclusion of a community garden in the park. Adding a community garden into the southeast corner of the park had been discussed during public engagement in 2019, and while no decision was made following the engagement, the majority of survey respondents at the time supported having a community garden in this corner of the park. However, between November 2019 and November 2021, three key considerations surfaced that led to the recommendation to not introduce a community garden into the park at this time.

Community Garden – 3 Key Considerations

The first consideration for not including a community garden at this time is the Cultural Focus Area and the allocation of the southeast area of the park in support of Reconciliation and Decolonization. Staff support the indigenous-led planning process determining the preferred uses in this area, including the degree to which a decolonized food system is incorporated, rather than concluding that a community garden is the preferred use.

The second consideration for not including a community garden is related to the Cultural Focus Area. The recently approved Local Food System Action Plan (LFSAP) includes an objective to "identify opportunities to remove barriers and support Indigenous ways of relating to the land and food systems, in alignment with the Park Board's decolonization goals and commitment to Reconciliation". While community gardens are able to align their actions with this objective, it is premature to assume that an indigenous-led design process would conclude that a community garden is the preferred model for integrating food into a landscape.

It is conceivable that alternative approaches to food production and gathering will be explored, including food forests and programs that consider the traditional, spiritual and cultural services that food provides. Imagining new and novel ways of integrating food production into parks is one of the reasons the LFSAP calls for the review and revision of existing documents: the [Park Board Urban Agriculture Policy](#) and the [Urban Agriculture Garden Guide](#). Currently, these documents discuss conventional approaches to integrating food into parks and do not yet provide direction on alternative approaches including food forests, which can be more widely integrated and are often more democratic than plot-focused community gardens.

The third and final consideration reflects observations staff have made since the pandemic arrived. It has become clear that parks across the city have been playing an essential role in supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of Vancouverites, particularly the un-programmed spaces in parks. In essence, these open areas have become the surrogate living room for people to enjoy nature, either alone or collectively, in flexible and adaptable ways that programmed spaces (e.g. sports fields, playgrounds, dog-off leash areas, community gardens) do not afford.



Recognizing how much of John Hendry Park is already programmed, maintaining spaces that are open and flexible is considered a priority. During the most recent round of engagement on the park renewal plan, 78% of survey respondents signaled it was 'Very Important' and 96% signaled it was 'Very or Somewhat Important' to provide flexible open spaces. With nearby redevelopment increasing density, it is expected that the popularity of John Hendry Park's flexible open spaces will continue to increase.

Cedar Cottage Community Garden

The Cedar Cottage Garden Society has operated the Cedar Cottage Community Garden (CCCG) since 2008. It currently occupies a combination of City of Vancouver, BC Hydro, and Translink owned properties at the corner of Victoria Drive and Stainsbury Avenue, south of John Hendry Park. A Licence Agreement has allowed the CCCG temporary use of the City's site until it is required for redevelopment. In 2018, the City gave notice that the site would be developed for an affordable housing project called Vienna House. As described in a [memo to Council](#) sent in January of this year, City staff "reviewed and presented community garden relocation site opportunities on City owned lots to CCCG Society leadership. To date no candidate sites are considered viable by the CCCG." On February 28, 2022, the City Manager provided an update to Council advising that the Society would be allowed to operate their garden on City land until September 30, 2022, at which time they would need to vacate the land.

In 2018, the CCCG Society submitted a request to the Park Board to relocate their garden to John Hendry Park. Park Board staff responded to the Society and identified "potential opportunities", including participating in the John Hendry Park planning process. Members of the CCCG attended the 2019 John Hendry Park engagement session that explored adding a community garden to the southeast corner of John Hendry Park. Based on the discussions that took place during the session, and considering the need to relocate their garden, the CCCG were optimistic about moving to John Hendry, although, and as previously noted, no decisions were made as to the appropriateness of adding a community garden into the park at that time.

In the meantime, additional food assets continue to be added to the Kensington-Cedar Cottage neighbourhood. In summer 2021, the [renewed Brewers Park](#) (located south of CCCG) reopened with new raised garden beds that are operated by the Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House.

In November 2021, as part of the most recent John Hendry Park Renewal Plan engagement, staff met with the CCCG Society to inform them that a community garden was not being recommended for John Hendry Park. Staff shared the three key considerations (as described above) as to why a community garden wasn't appropriate at this time, and invited the CCCG to participate in the renewal plan for nearby General Brock Park. Engagement is expected to begin this month (March 2022), and it will present opportunities to explore integrating food production into the park based on the new LFSAP.

The Society members were disappointed with this news and, in response, submitted a report to the Park Board (dated January 20, 2022) to support the locating of their garden in the southeast corner of John Hendry Park as a good fit.

Next Steps

Staff are finalizing recommendations for the John Hendry Park Renewal Plan based on the engagement outcomes and considerations outlined above. It is anticipated that a comprehensive report with the proposed renewal plan will be presented to the Board for consideration in spring



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2022. Subject to approval, this plan will provide the Board with a long term program for the renewal of John Hendry Park.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

kc/ct

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
Park Development
PB Communications

APPENDIX A – John Hendry Park Cultural Focus Area

JOHN HENDRY PARK RENEWAL PLAN

PART 2: UPDATED DIRECTIONS

CULTURAL FOCUS AREA

The John Hendry Park Renewal Plan acknowledges that the park, like the City of Vancouver, sits on the ancestral and unceded territory of the *xw̓məθkwəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish) and *səlilwətaʔ* (Tseil-Waututh) Nations and is an important site of ongoing use and spiritual importance to Indigenous Peoples. To reflect the Vancouver Park Board's commitment to Reconciliation and Decolonization, a Cultural Focus Area has been identified in the south part of John Hendry Park. This area will be co-designed with local First Nations and Urban Indigenous Peoples to:

- » Reflect Indigenous Peoples' values and programming needs.
- » Fulfill the Urban Indigenous communities' requests voiced through the engagement process.
- » Support positive community relationships that offer benefit to all residents.

Participation of Urban Indigenous residents and consultation with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tseil-Waututh Nations will guide directions for this area.

