



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

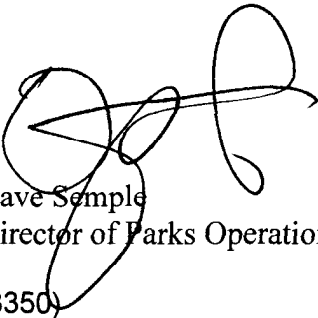
To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
From: D Semple
Director of Parks Operations
Date: July 16, 2004
File: 06-2345-01/2004-Vol 01

Mike Redpath
Manager, Parks - Programs, Planning & Design

Re: Terra Nova Rural Park Concept Plan

Staff Recommendation

1. That the Terra Nova Rural Park Concept Plan presented in this report be approved as the long term vision for the park; and
2. That the Terra Nova Rural Park Phase One Implementation Plan be approved.


Dave Semple
Director of Parks Operations
(3350)


Mike Redpath
Manager, Parks Programs, Planning & Design
(1275)

(Att. 4)

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Recreation & Cultural Services		Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy Planning		Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation Planning.....		Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY TAG		YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO		YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

In 1996 a Referendum was passed authorizing Council to acquire properties for public use within the area referred to as the Terra Nova North West Quadrant. Since then the City has successfully acquired 63 acres of land. In 2001, an inventory was conducted that documented the environmental, heritage, and landscape character features and assets of the lands. The information from the inventory formed the basis to begin a park planning process for the site in late 2003.

This report outlines the park planning process and presents the preferred Concept Plan for approval by Council.

Analysis

A. The Proposed Terra Nova Rural Park Concept Plan

The Vision:

Terra Nova has many existing unique features that include a wide range of ecosystems, a rich cultural landscape with evidence of an agricultural and fishing heritage, and a pleasant ambience and rural landscape character (attachment 1). The Plan is designed to enhance these features and provide people with a place to enjoy, respect and learn about the past.

At each of the Open Houses the public expressed a deep appreciation for the site. A number of distinct themes evolved and were repeated to how the park should develop. These included:

- tread sensitively on the land and keep the park natural
- keep the park unique and peaceful
- retain the openness, views and rural agricultural feel
- combine the best of all the features.

Based on the public input and the unique existing assets the long term Vision for the site is:

To preserve the unique rural landscape character of Terra Nova North West Quadrant Park while providing a balance between agricultural heritage, wildlife conservation, and recreational uses.

The Plan and main elements of the proposed ***Terra Nova Rural Park*** are presented in detail in Attachment 2.

B. The Public Planning Process

Three sets of Public Open Houses were held in February, April and June of 2004 with an additional presentation to three Advisory Committees (Environment, Heritage, and Public Art) on April 21st, 2004.

One hundred and eight (108) people attended the final Open House(s) at City Hall to review the Preferred Concept Plan and 99 filled out the Comment Sheets (see attachment 3 for results).

An overwhelming 98% *Liked* or *Very Much Liked* the overall Preferred Plan and vision. For those few that did not support the Preferred Plan their main focus was the environment and an interest in preserving the land exclusively for wildlife with no or absolutely minimal human activity.

The two specific proposed uses that did not receive strong support were the *community gardens* (68% support) and the *dogs off-leash area* (61% support).

The community gardens were viewed by some people as an “exclusive use” of park land. However, there are community benefits to locating this use here. Over 2500 people live in townhouses in the immediate area with little to no backyard space and community gardening is a popular activity that promotes wellness and connecting with others. The intent for these gardens is that there will be a strong educational component and programs that support sharing food, such as *Plant a Row-Grow a Row*, will be promoted. In addition, the temporary No. 2 Road community garden will need relocating in the near future. For these reasons staff is recommending that this use be kept in the Park Plan and that the focus should be on creatively integrating the gardens into the park and allowing for community access.

Concern was also expressed over the proposed dog’s off-leash area. Those who supported a designated area believed that there is a need for places where dogs can run freely. Those against this use predominately cited environmental reasons - either that it was not the best use of the land or that dogs are detrimental to wildlife.

Staff is recommending that an overall management strategy be adopted in the park that would involve the creation of three distinct areas in the park including a fenced dogs off-leash area, a dogs on-leash area, and a new *No Dog Zone*.

C. Implementation Plan

The Terra Nova Rural Park Plan is a long term plan and will be implemented over a number of years as finances allow. The proposed phasing priorities are based on public input, site requirements (e.g. removal of invasive species), further land acquisition, and availability of tenanted City lands.

Phase One

In 2004 and 2005, the focus will be on site restoration, public access and the provision of some of the proposed site features including site cleanup and invasive species removal, woodlot and hedgerow plantings, trails, securing City owned heritage houses (to prevent further deterioration), community gardens, additional parking along River Road, establishing a caretaker, and park gates

Phase Two

In 2006 further construction would focus on enhancements to the waterfront including the marsh lookout and boardwalks, park interpretive features and trails.

E. Next Steps

Land Acquisition

The City owns the majority of the land in the area and is pursuing the acquisition of two outstanding properties. The City owns a number of homes and auxiliary buildings with different tenancy agreements ranging from a monthly lease to a life tenancy (attachment 4 for a map showing land ownership and tenancy agreements). The proposed plan is a long term vision that shows how the whole site could be developed including the two properties that are still under negotiation.

Heritage Settlement Management Strategy

A heritage, architectural and structural assessment has been undertaken for the two City owned heritage homes. A similar assessment would be conducted if the City acquires the three remaining heritage listed buildings. Upon completion of the assessment an heritage management strategy will be developed.

Archaeological Study

A permit from the Provincial Government has recently been issued and fieldwork will be undertaken to provide the City with an archaeological inventory of the site. The findings may impact the design layout and details and influence the interpretation themes.

Heritage Slough/Wetland Viability Engineering Study

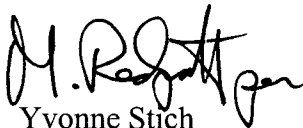
Further engineering research and fieldwork is needed to determine how the heritage slough and wetland would be constructed to ensure a sustainable system.

Financial Impact

The cost of this project is in the order of magnitude of \$ 6 - 8,000,000. Further refinement of the budget will occur at the next phase of detailed design. Available funding for implementation of Phase One is \$1,250,000 approved in the Capital Budget accounts 40822, 40826, and 40837.

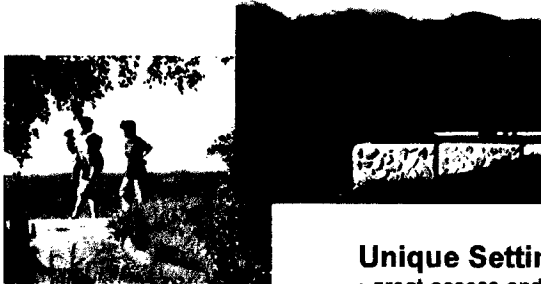
Conclusion

The Terra Nova Rural Park Concept Plan as presented was supported by the majority of the public that attended the final Public Open Houses held on June 16th and 17th, 2004 at City Hall. The vision for this site is to preserve the rural character while providing a balance between agricultural heritage, wildlife conservation, and recreational uses. The Plan and a recommended Phase One Implementation are presented in this report for approval by Council.



Yvonne Stich
Park Planner
(3310)

What's unique and valuable about the Terra Nova North West Quadrant Lands?



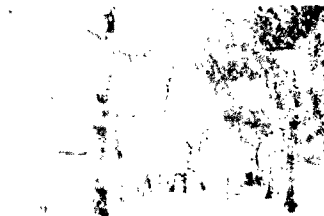
Unique Setting

- great access and views
- adjacent to popular recreational corridor
- adjacent to Terra Nova Natural Area and Sturgeon Banks



Environment

- high diversity of habitats
- upland refuge for marsh shorebirds and wildlife
- habitat for blue listed species



Rich Cultural History

- 1868 first non-native settlement
- heritage listed buildings
- mature trees from original homesteads
- visible remnants of original subdivision plan



Cold Comfort Farm



Rural Landscape Character



Existing Buildings

- potential re-use of City owned buildings

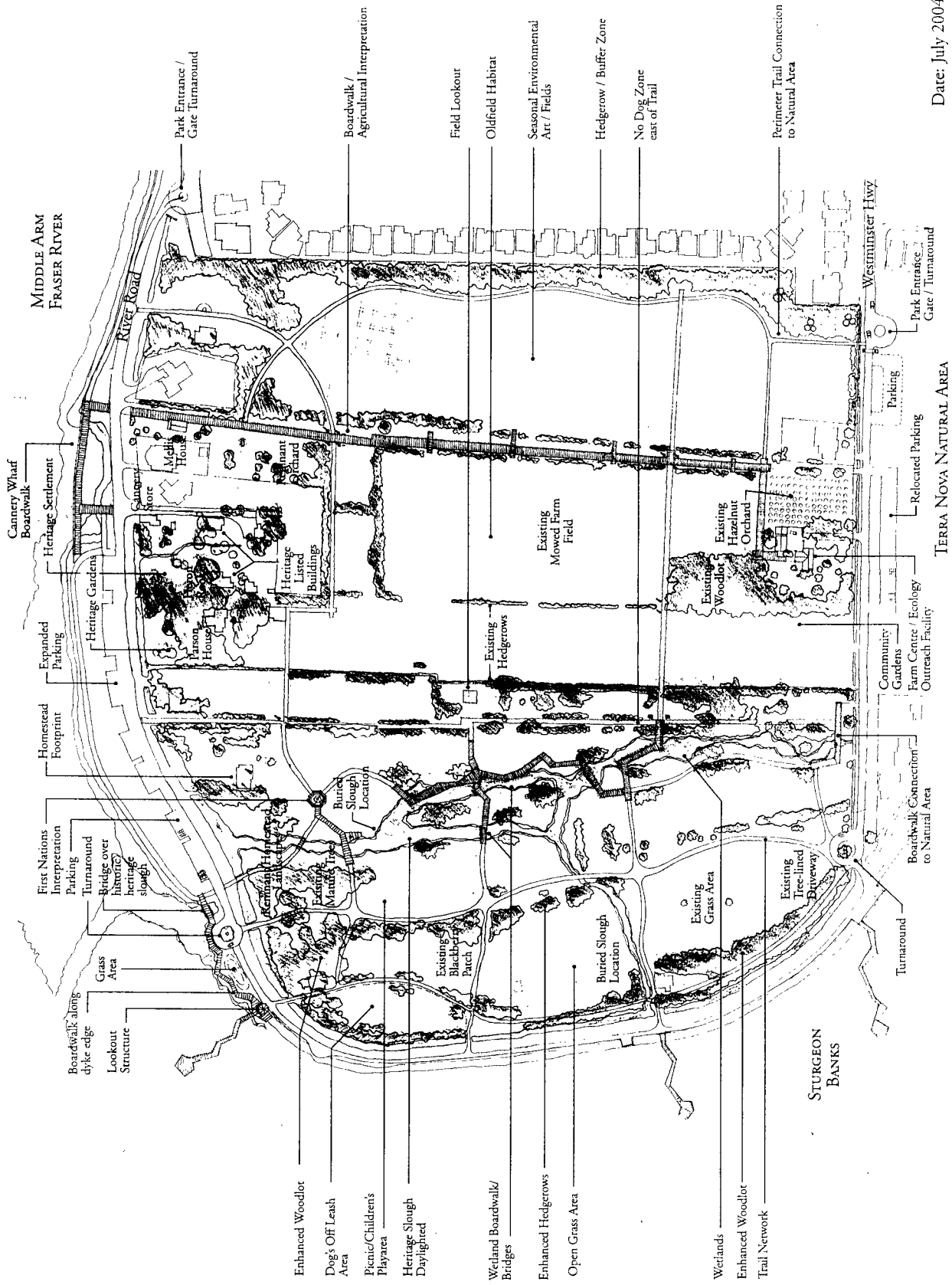


TERRA NOVA NORTH WEST QUADRANT
Park Plan Open House

CITY of Richmond
February 2004

TERRA NOVA RURAL PARK CONCEPT PLAN

Attachment 2



Date: July 2004

1. Heritage District

- ☐ Heritage Settlement Site
- ☐ Heritage Interpretive Features
- ☐ The Cannery Wharf

Homestead Footprints: marking the location



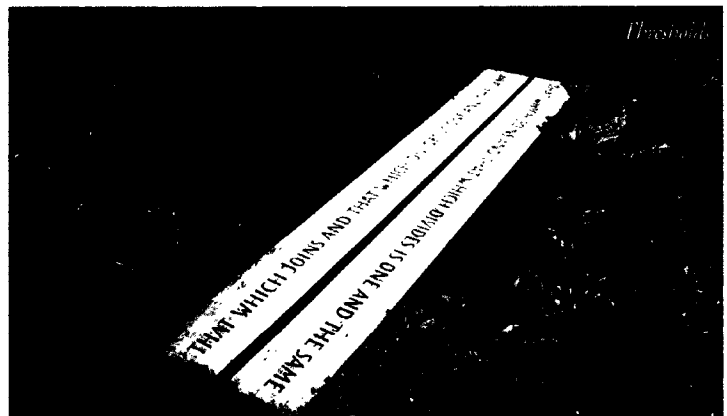
Heritage Gardens



old pathways



Mellis Stage Line



Threshold



Heritage Settlement: Mellis House



Heritage Settlement: Cannery Store



Bridges

Heritage District

This district refers predominately to the land that was settled along River Road and still contains five heritage listed buildings as well as remnants of the fishing industry. The intent is to preserve and interpret the rich story of the pioneer settlers, and the farming and fishing history of Terra Nova.

- *Heritage Settlement Site*

The long term goal is to retain the five (5) settlers' houses and establish creative adaptive reuses such as caretaker's suite, interpretive center, museum outreach programs, community meeting space, artist-in-residence workshop, exhibition space, or a concession stand. A minimum of two should be open for park uses while the others may find a P3 use to be financially sustainable, be rented out or stand as interpretive artefacts in the park. Grounds of the heritage houses will be restored to reflect the character of the original landscape.

The intent is to balance heritage authenticity while protecting the wildlife values and features, specifically the heron rookery (which is located on the private property with the three heritage buildings). A management plan needs to be developed and the approach taken will depend upon whether the City owns the group of five houses (assuming further acquisition) or only the two houses.

- *Heritage Interpretive Features*

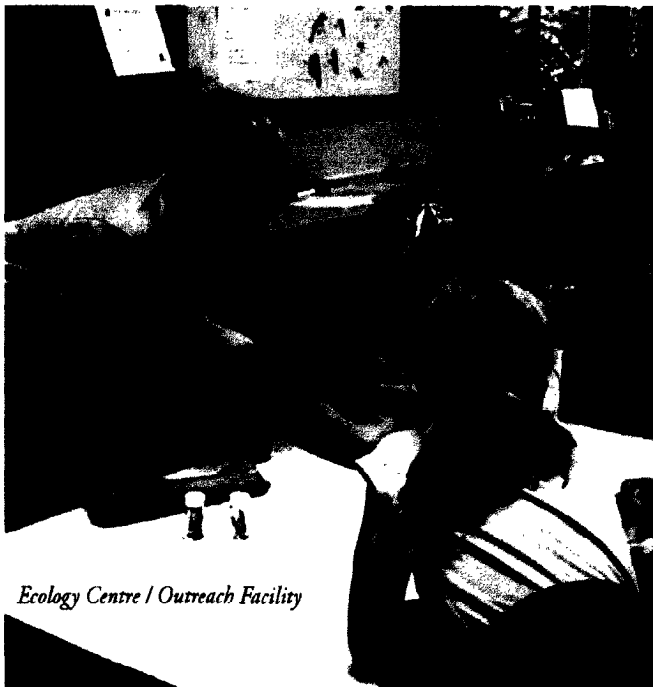
The goal is to provide interesting, subtle and creative interpretation and not inundate the park with too many signs. Included in the plan is the artistic creation of homestead footprints in the location of the original homesteads; bridges, benches, outlooks and thresholds that would contain simple interpretive elements and messages (these would occur throughout the park) and a recreation of the Mellis Terra Nova/Vancouver/ Eburne stage coach.

- *The Cannery Wharf*

A raised boardwalk/deck will cross the water where the former BC Packers cannery was located. This will allow people to get out over the water, provide interpretation opportunities, and make a connection back to the upland heritage landscape. The former cannery store (the small white heritage building across the street) could potentially be used as a small concession stand.

2. Site Interpretation

- ☐ *First Nations Interpretation*
- ☐ *Seasonal Environmental Art*
- ☐ *Ecology Centre / Outreach Facility*
- ☐ *Field Outlook Structure*
- ☐ *Save Terra Nova Interpretive feature*



Seasonal Environmental Art



Site Interpretation

Throughout the park there will be a wide variety of features to encourage learning and discovery of the unique history and ecological features of the site in a creative manner.

- *First Nations Interpretive Site*

An open interpretation structure and an interpretive trail will be developed adjacent to the historic slough. The theme and specific topics to be interpreted will depend upon the outcome of the archaeological research and fieldwork.

- *Seasonal Environmental Art*

Temporary and seasonal field patterns will be created through a sensitive use of plant material (grasses or crops). The field will remain fallow in winter and provide refuge for wildlife. The intent is to add interest and agricultural interpretation while retaining environmental values.

- *Ecology Center/ Outreach Facility*

This is a potential adaptive reuse of one of the City owned buildings (proposed at 2771 Westminster Highway) for Nature Park outreach programs, as meeting space for nature groups, and as a starting point for self guided interpretation tours.

- *Field Outlook Structure*

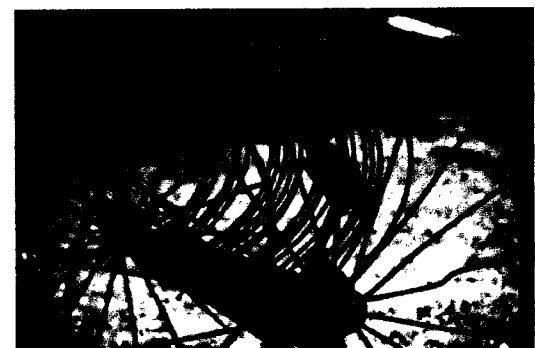
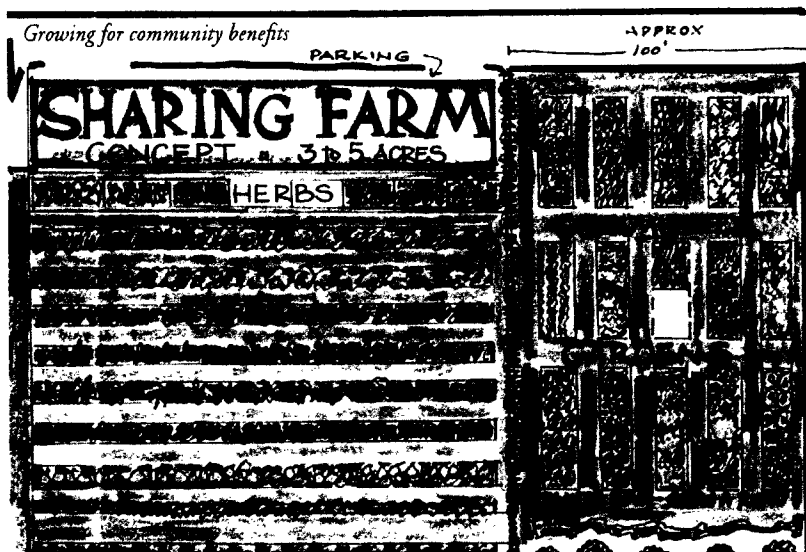
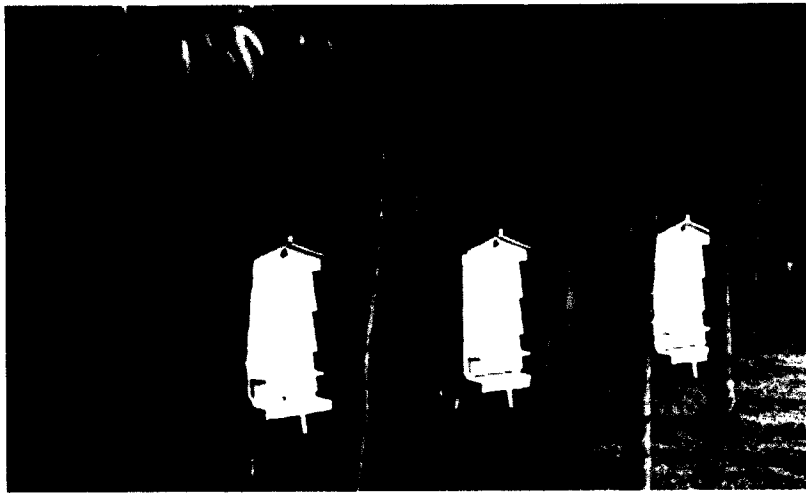
An outlook structure will be constructed in the middle of the site to provide maximum 360 degree viewing. Bird blinds may be added to increase bird watching opportunities.

- *Save Terra Nova Interpretive Feature*

The history and evolution of land uses in Terra Nova from the 1880's to the present day park use is an interesting story. The intent is to sensitively show how economic and community values and decision making have evolved over the last hundred years.

3. Farm Centre

- ☐ Farm Management Centre
- ☐ Group Farming / Community Garden Plots



Farm Centre

The goal is to build upon the agricultural heritage of the site and modern urban needs by creating a central area where community based 'farming', community gardens, agricultural interpretation, and education about food sources could occur. One of the existing houses with auxiliary buildings along Westminster Highway would be adapted for reuse as part of this centre.

- ***Farm Management Centre:***

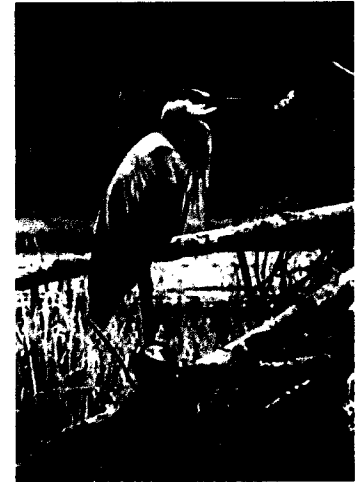
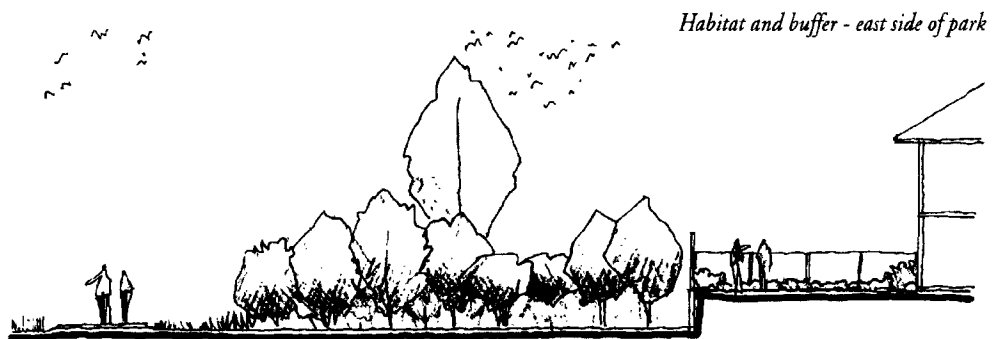
The intent is to utilize existing buildings for maintenance equipment, agricultural education, and as a community meeting area. The proposed site for this center is 2771 Westminster Highway which would also be used as the Ecology Centre/ outreach program facility. This site has a number of buildings and landscape features such as an established hazelnut orchard and a beautiful manicured garden that will be retained and could be used for weddings or other events.

- ***Group Farming/Community Garden Plots***

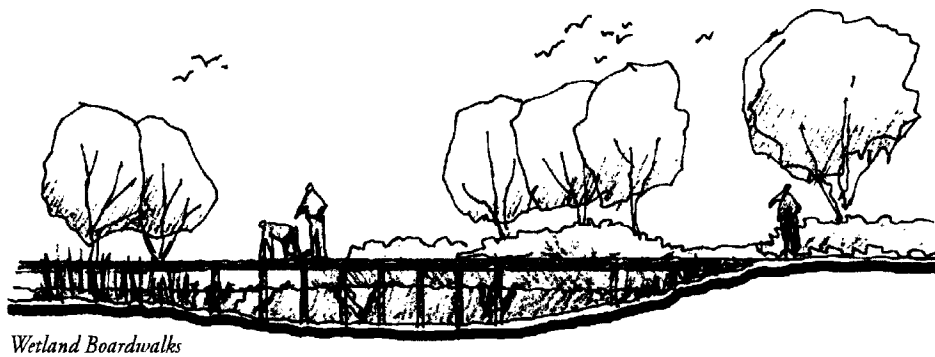
A portion of the park will be designed to allow for community members, school groups, and potentially a non-profit organization group such as the Fruit Tree Project to maintain gardening plots. Food crops could be grown for educational and community benefits e.g. providing fresh produce for the Food Bank through initiatives such as *Plant a Row - Grow a Row*.

4. Wildlife Habitats

- ☐ *Riparian Areas and Drainage Ditches*
- ☐ *Woodlots and Mature Trees*
- ☐ *Hedgerows*
- ☐ *Old-field Habitat*



Birdwatching activities



Old Fields and Hedgerows



Riparian Corridors



Wildlife Habitats

The goal is to protect and enhance the biodiversity and habitat values of the site. Much of the existing environmental benefits of the land are a result of a century of farming and homestead landscapes that are now predominately fallow and naturalizing. The site is being enhanced to protect species with the greatest need, have restricted or threatened habitat requirements, whose habitats are well suited for this park (building upon existing features) and for breeding, overwintering and migratory birds.

- *Riparian Areas and Drainage Ditches*

Water features provide an extremely rich habitat with food and nesting places for a wide variety of species. The heritage slough will be daylighted (reinstated) for interpretation opportunities and for enhancing the biodiversity of the site.

- *Woodlots and Mature Trees*

Many of the existing trees are a result of landscaping around the original homesteads. These will be protected, enhanced and further planting will be introduced. These trees together with the adjacent old-fields provide important habitat for raptors (the blue heron and barn owl). The understory plants in the woodlots provide one of the most diverse habitats for wildlife on the site.

- *Hedgerows*

Hedgerows provide habitat and movement corridors for small animals and connect larger patches of habitat. Many of the existing hedgerows delineate the original property lines. These will be preserved, enhanced, interpreted and a new hedgerow will be added as a buffer on the east side of the site adjacent to the residential area.

- *Old-field Habitats*

Farmland, predominately in the centre of the site, will be maintained and managed as fallow or 'old-field' land for its habitat values for raptors. Preserving this type of habitat is of regional significance as open fields are rapidly being lost in the Lower Mainland.

5. Passive Open Space

- ☐ *Passive Open Space*
- ☐ *Dogs Off Leash Area*
- ☐ *No Dogs Zone*



Passive Open Space

The intent is to have areas and features that allow for informal leisure use such as picnicking, children's play and a dogs off-leash area.

- *Passive Open Space*

This community use space is located on the west side of the site close to parking and includes features such as picnic tables, open grass areas for informal play, creative children's play facilities, new planting and washrooms. Rehabilitation will be undertaken in this area that contains remnants of concrete, garages and large patches of blackberries.

- *Dog's Off Leash Area*

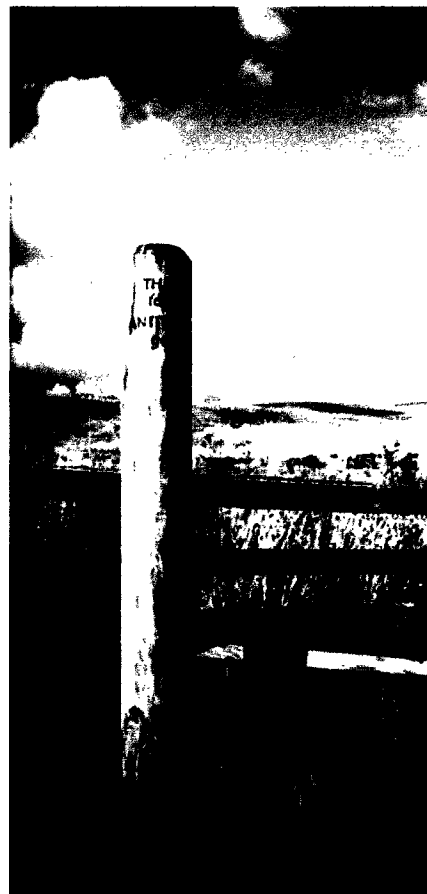
This is a fenced area with grass and trees located close to parking and the dyke trail. This designated area is intended to be part of an overall strategy to help manage dogs in this park.

- *No Dogs Zone*

To protect the environmental value of the old-fields and as part of a strategy to manage dogs in the park a No Dog Zone will be created in the eastern portion of the park. The north –south trail located between the heritage slough and the field outlook structure will be the general dividing line between where dogs on leash are allowed and where dogs are not allowed.

6. Park Infrastructure

- ☐ *Turnarounds and Park Entry*
- ☐ *Trails*
- ☐ *Field and Riparian Boardwalks*
- ☐ *Parking*



Park Infrastructure

New elements such as trails and entry gates will be developed that allow people to move through the site and make the vehicular circulation more functional. A variety of trails will be constructed using existing laneways and paths as well as new boardwalks.

- *Turnarounds and Park Entry Features*

These features include gates at Westminster Highway and River Road to control access to the site at night and turnarounds at the end of the roads and at the gate entrances. The security gates will be designed to ensure that the few residents on these roads can still control access to their homes when the park is closed at night.

- *Trails*

The trail system will include existing lanes, farm pathways and new paths, follow along hedgerows, connect to the dyke trail, and be a mix of hard and soft surfaces. A major north-south boardwalk will be constructed that will link to the cannery wharf boardwalk; travel adjacent to the old-field habitat; and link to the Farm Centre and Terra Nova Natural Area. Interpretation and lookouts will occur along the boardwalk.

- *Field and Riparian Boardwalks*

Boardwalks will be constructed over open fields to help create separation and over the historic slough and the wetland.

- *Parking*

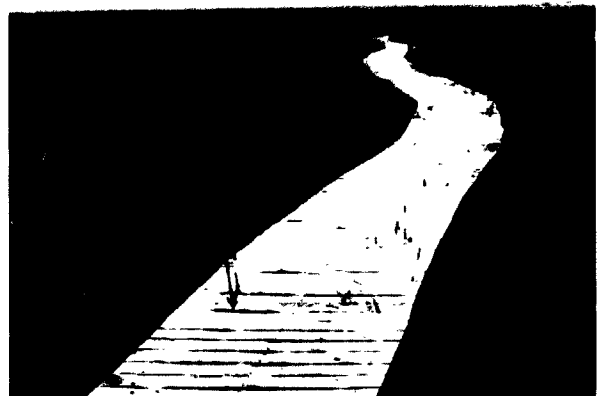
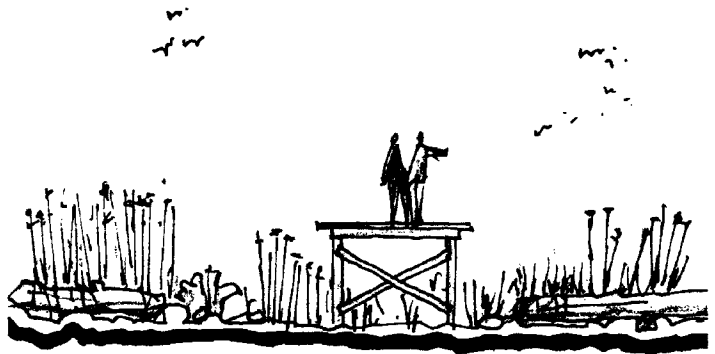
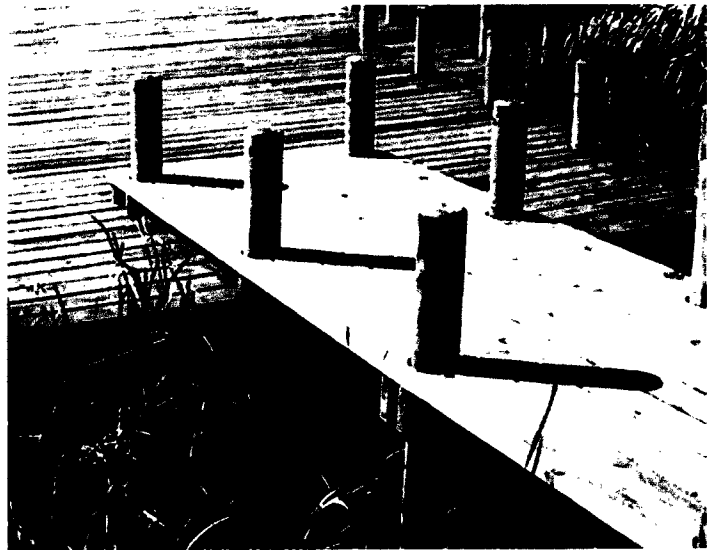
The parking has been reorganized and more spaces have been provided with opportunities in the plan for further additions as needed. The parking will be perpendicular to the River Road at the north and will be moved closer to the future community garden area along the south.

7. Dyke Perimeter

- ☐ Marsh Board Walks
- ☐ Lookout Structure
- ☐ Heritage Slough Enhancement



1910 - Dyke and Cannery buildings



Dyke Perimeter

The waterfront is an important aspect of the site both historically and recreationally and is highly valued by the community. River Road and the trail system provide the main access and gateway to the site. The goal is to link the waterfront physically and through interpretation to the upland uses; maximize viewing opportunities; and enhance circulation.

- *Marsh Boardwalks*

There are three boardwalk locations proposed in Sturgeon Banks. These were very popular with the public, however, further discussion is needed with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to confirm the feasibility of this proposal.

- *Lookout Structure*

This is located at a strategic spot that allows for maximum views of both the river and the marsh. Parking will be relocated and this area will be enhanced with a mounded grass sitting area, a dyke edge deck and boardwalk, and a two-storey observation structure.

- *Heritage Slough Enhancement*

This involves riparian improvements to the original mouth of the heritage slough and creating a boardwalk/bridge with interpretation over the water.

Public Open Houses June 16th and 17th, 2004

Summary of Public Input

The plan was presented with proposed features/land uses numbered and referenced to boards that described them in more detail. The public was asked to fill out a comment sheet and first rate the overall Vision and then rate the individual features from Like Very Much to Dislike or the option Don't Know.

Results

22 out of the 25 land uses received 80% or better support, with only three receiving between 60% and 80% support (see below)

Many of the respondents also commented that the planning team had listened to earlier comments at the first open houses and incorporated them into the Preferred Plan:

- "Great job pulling all the material from the previous open house into a strong proposal."
- "I think it is a superb conceptual use for the area. A big hurrah for the people involved!
It makes me proud to live in Richmond."
- "Very, very exciting, thanks for listening."
- "It appears that the whole plan has been well thought out, and the proposal would have my full support."
- "If I made a park it would be like this- good job."

Comments that reflected concerns or cautionary notes included:

- "Please no off-leash dog park...Area too sensitive"
- "Tall trees will block views"
- "Ensure that there is minimal encroachment on the existing open spaces"
- "Very peaceful and quiet – should stay that way"
- "Move garden plots/farming away from residential area"
- "Not asphalt except for some areas for wheelchair accessibility"
- "We don't need to manage and manipulate every blade of grass- we might just scare off the birds, wildlife etc."

Summary of Ratings:

*Note: All other proposed park uses not mentioned below had an approval rating above 96%.

Land uses	Percentage Liked
<input type="checkbox"/> Ecology Centre	96 %
<input type="checkbox"/> First Nations Interpretive Site	95%
<input type="checkbox"/> Turnaround/Park Entry	95%
<input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Boardwalk	94%
<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal Mown Fields	92%
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking	92%
<input type="checkbox"/> Save Terra Nova Interpretive Feature	90%
<input type="checkbox"/> Farm Centre Buildings	88%
<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal Environmental Art	78%
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Farming/Community Gardens	68%
<input type="checkbox"/> Dogs Off Leash Area	61%

Land Ownership

CITY OWNED LAND
(WITHOUT TENANTS):
INCLUDED IN PARK DESIGN

CITY OWNED LAND
(WITH TENANTS):
INCLUDED IN PARK DESIGN
(TYPE/DURATION OF
TENANCY NOTED)

PRIVATE UNDER NEGOTIATION TO ACQUIRE:
INCLUDED IN PARK DESIGN

PRIVATELY OWNED LAND:
NOT INCLUDED IN PARK DESIGN

