



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

Date: February 4, 2014

From: Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks

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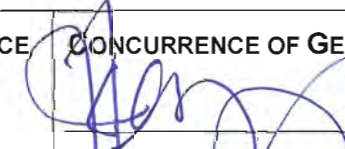
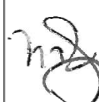

Re: **Richmond Community Memorial Garden Site Selection Review**

Staff Recommendation

1. That staff issue a Request for Expressions of Interest for the Richmond Community Memorial Garden as detailed in the report titled "Richmond Community Memorial Garden Site Selection Review," dated February 4, 2014, from the Senior Manager, Parks.
2. That staff report back to Council with the results of the Request for Expression of Interest and recommended next steps.

Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks
(604-247-4942)

Att. 7

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Real Estate Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 FOR C. CARLISLE
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO 

Staff Report

Origin

At the October 29, 2013, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting staff presented a report regarding an Expression of Interest for the development and operation of a Memorial Garden in Richmond. As a response to the report, staff received the following referral from the Committee:

That the staff report titled "Richmond Memorial Garden Expression of Interest" be referred back to staff for a review of a longer list of appropriate City-owned sites including the Nature Park East and the East Richmond Bog Forest.

This report relates to the achievement of the following 2011-2014 Council Term Goal:

#2.7 Completion of the Memorial Garden Project

The purpose of this report is to describe the site selection criteria and the evaluation of the candidate sites for the proposed Memorial Garden in order to present options for proceeding with site selection for Council's consideration.

Analysis

In the interest of providing an understanding of the selection of candidate sites, the findings of the Memorial Garden Feasibility Study are reviewed in this report.

The proposed Richmond Community Memorial Garden has been conceived as a facility serving both community and individual memorialization purposes. Through the Council approved 2005 City of Richmond Memorial Garden Feasibility Study, it was determined that:

- “1 . A facility offering a range of features and services for the interment of cremated remains would meet the needs of Richmond residents”;
2. The facility would more likely be financially successful if it was located on City-owned land, e.g., land costs removed from the pro forma”;
3. The City does not currently have the capacity to enter into this new line of business so it was recommended that the City enter into a agreement with a private sector organization to develop and operate the memorial garden”; and
4. The governance of the memorial garden includes City and community oversight.”

Richmond residents consulted during the Feasibility Study expressed a strong desire to include recognition of people and events of importance to the community and for the memorial garden to provide a public amenity similar to civically operated cemeteries, e.g., Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver. For these reasons, the proposed memorial garden is referred to as the Richmond *Community Memorial Garden*.

Community Memorial Garden Services and Site Characteristics

The purpose of the 2005 Memorial Garden Feasibility Study, in part, was to identify the type of memorial services that Richmond residents prefer as well as the site characteristics that would support a memorial garden offering those services, e.g., size and location. The Feasibility Study findings are as follows:

- 53% of residents indicate that they would be somewhat or very likely to have their remains placed in a memorial garden in Richmond if it were made available.
- 51% of residents preferred interment of ashes in a columbarium (a structure or building containing niches for cremated remains).
- Just under 3 in 10 residents would be very likely to consider alternative means of memorializing the deceased, e.g., memorial plaques, maintaining a tree or flower bed, sponsoring statuary.
- Site features of greatest importance to Richmond residents include; a quiet setting, a location near a natural area/open space, not in proximity to residential neighbourhoods, attractive views.
- Other desirable features were described such as clearly defined garden walls, views of the mountains, a flowing water feature and views of the river or other water.

*Note: Refer to Attachment 1 for images of facilities that reflect residents' preferences

The Feasibility Study concluded that a minimum five acre site would be viable and have a projected capacity that would take 40 years to fill.

Site Selection Criteria

During the course of the Feasibility Study, site selection criteria were developed through a telephone survey, a community stakeholder's workshop, a follow-up focus group meeting, a staff steering committee workshop, consultant recommendations on service options and market preferences, and the private funeral services sector perspective gained through individual interviews.

The following are eight criteria that reflect the community's perspective and address potential market interests:

1. **Compatible** – There are no negative impacts from adjacent uses, e.g., a quiet setting, no highway/industrial/airport impacts.
2. **Flexible** – Existing uses that are supported by permanent infrastructure or have requirements that are particular to a location are not considered flexible, e.g., programmed sport use, natural areas with high ecological value.
3. **Non-residential** – Not directly adjacent to residential areas,

4. **Accessible** – Accessible by public transit, e.g., a bus stop within 800 meters,
5. **Scenic** – A scenic, natural setting with water views if possible,
6. **Serviced** – A fully serviced site, e.g., water, electricity, sewer,
7. **Existing Features** – A site with desirable existing natural or built features, e.g., existing trees, buildings that may be repurposed,
8. **Public** – Associated with public open space to facilitate memorial celebration and community use.

One additional criteria has been added:

9. **Non-Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)** – An ALR designation is considered a constraint given that previous applications for non-farm use for similar proposals were not approved by the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission.

Candidate Sites

A total of 20 City-owned sites (Attachment 2) that are a minimum of five acres in size or, where a portion of the site of at least five acres could be used for a community memorial garden, have been evaluated. The Northeast Bog Forest has been added as per the referral by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) Committee on October 29, 2013.

Sites Located Outside the City's Perimeter Dikes

As per the Provincial Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act, the land must be considered suited to a place of interment in perpetuity. Since MacDonald Beach and Garry Point Park are located outside the dikes, presenting risks to long-term viability, both parks have been removed from further evaluation.

Sites Located Within the ALR

At the October 29, 2013, PRCS Committee meeting, staff were asked to consider the feasibility and potential for sites located within the Provincial ALR designated areas.

Parks staff met with Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) staff on November 5, 2013, to discuss the implications of selecting a site within the ALR. Since a memorial garden is not considered an agricultural use by the ALC, the City was advised that it would be required to make an application to use land in the ALR for non-farm purposes. Some of the factors that the ALC takes into consideration are:

- The permanence of the use and whether it will permanently damage the physical capability of the land for agricultural use;
- The relationship with adjacent uses (i.e., are the adjacent uses agricultural or non-agricultural, is there potential conflict with adjacent agricultural uses);
- The ability to accommodate the use outside the ALR;
- Demonstration of community need; and

- Any benefits to agriculture as a result of the proposal, as per Richmond's 2003 Agriculture Viability Strategy.

Applications are reviewed and approved by the ALC Board who meets bimonthly. If a site within the ALR is selected, then staff will prepare an application to the ALC for their consideration.

Candidate Site Evaluation

The evaluation matrix on the following page has been developed to assist with site selection. The green arrows indicate that the site satisfies the criteria while the red arrows indicate that the site does not satisfy the criteria. The orange arrows indicate that the site does not fully satisfy the criteria, for example under the "Non-residential" criterion, where the whole site is adjacent to a residential area but where space is potentially available within the site to allow for some separation. Orange arrows are also used under the "Serviced" criterion to indicate that the existing site services (i.e., water, sewer, electricity, drainage) are not adequate for the proposed use and would have to be upgraded.

Site Evaluation Matrix

Rank*	Candidate Site Name	Site Selection Criteria								
		Compatible	Flexible	Non-residential	Accessible	Scenic	Serviced	Existing Features	Public	Non-ALR
8	Woodward's Landing	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↔	↑	↑	↑
5	South Dyke Agriculture Park	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓
5	Terra Nova Natural Area	↑	↓	↔	↓	↑	↔	↑	↑	↑
5	Woodward Slough Natural Area	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓
5	12751/12851 Rice Mill Road	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
5	14420/14580 Triangle Road	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↔	↓	↑	↑
5	Blundell Park	↑	↓	↔	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
5	Palmer Garden City Park	↑	↓	↔	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
5	South Arm Community Park	↑	↓	↔	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
5	Hugh Boyd Community Park (Pitch and Putt)	↑	↓	↔	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
5	Steveston Community Park	↑	↓	↔	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
5	Garden City Community Park	↑	↓	↔	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
5	King George Community Park	↑	↓	↔	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
5	The Gardens Agricultural Park	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓
5	Garden City Lands	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓
4	Northeast Bog Forest	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓
4	Nature Park East	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓
2	Sidaway Road Public Works Yard	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↔	↓	↓	↓

*The rank of each site correlates with the number of positive rankings (fully satisfies the criteria)

Ranking Legend	
↑	Fully satisfies the criteria
↔	Does not fully satisfy the criteria
↓	Does not satisfy the criteria

Two of the top ranked sites are further analysed below regarding their suitability for a community memorial garden. In addition, two sites that were suggested by Council for consideration at the October 29, 2013, PRCS Committee meeting are included in order of priority:

1. Woodward's Landing Park (Attachment 3)

The Woodward's Landing site satisfies all of the site selection criteria except for the "Serviced" criterion since the site services would have to be upgraded. At the October 29, 2013, PRCS Committee meeting, staff were directed to consider other sites.

2. South Dyke Agricultural Park (Attachment 4)

The 51.7 acre City-owned property at 13871 No. 3 Road, between No. 3 Road and Gilbert Road is currently used for agricultural purposes, including the City tree nursery, a community garden and the Sharing Farm orchard. The remainder of the site is leased for farming purposes. This site satisfies five of the nine criteria:

- The existing farm uses on the site are flexible, there are no adjacent residential uses, it is in proximity to the river, the surrounding agricultural lands offer a tranquil setting while the south eastern part of the site has a stand of significant trees and is part of a larger recreational zone, including the South Dyke Trail.
- It does not meet the "Compatible" criterion due to the odours emitted by the adjacent Metro Vancouver sewage treatment plant, it is not considered "Accessible" since the nearest transit route is 2.5 kilometres away, the site is not serviced and it is within the ALR so does not satisfy the "Non-ALR" criterion.

The additional sites recommended by Council are:

3. Richmond Nature Park East (Attachment 5)

A five acre area may be located on a portion of the site that has been previously disturbed and where a current parking lot exists today. This site satisfies four of the site selection criteria:

- The site is not adjacent to residential uses, is immediately accessible by public transit, and provides a scenic natural setting in a public park.
- It has received a negative ranking under the "Compatible" criterion due to the impacts of highway and aircraft noise; the "Flexible" criterion since the park is a bog with high ecological value; the "Serviced" criterion as it is un-serviced; the "Existing Features" criterion because it does not have any existing features that could be incorporated within a memorial garden; and, the "Non-ALR" criterion as it is located within the ALR.

Submission of a non-farm use application to the Provincial ALC would be required. In addition, geotechnical works would be necessary to minimize impact to the surrounding bog areas and the site's hydrology. It should be noted that this site has also been considered for future Civic facilities including a potential kennel/animal shelter.

4. North East Bog Forest (Attachment 6)

The footprint of a five acre area may be located where drainage activities have altered the bog environment. This site satisfies four of the site selection criteria:

- This location is in a quiet, rural location without residential uses nearby as well as being very scenic with natural features in a public park setting.
- It does not satisfy the "Flexible" criterion since the park is a bog with high ecological value; the "Accessible" criterion with public transit at least 2 kilometres away; the "Serviced" Criterion since the site is un-serviced; the "Existing Features" criterion because it does not have any existing features that could be incorporated within a memorial garden; and the "Non-ALR" criterion as it is located within the ALR.

Submission of a non-farm use application to the Provincial ALC would be required. In addition, geotechnical works would be necessary to minimize impact to the surrounding bog areas and the site's hydrology.

Site Selection Options

Option 1 - Issue the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) including a short-list of candidate sites (Recommended)

While the Memorial Garden Feasibility Study included consultation with the funeral services industry, the input received on location and site characteristics was of a general nature. In order to obtain more specific input from the industry, the RFEOI could request an analysis of the suitability of a short list of candidate sites (e.g., three). This would allow the City to engage industry expertise to investigate candidate sites in addition to testing the broader feasibility of the proposed Community Memorial Garden.

This approach would advance the Community Memorial Garden on two fronts; first, prospective proponents could be pre-qualified for a subsequent Request for Proposal to develop and operate the facility and second, the selection of a site will be more fully informed through industry input.

The purpose of the RFEOI and the process associated with it were outlined in the report titled "Richmond Memorial Garden Expression of Interest" submitted to PRCS Committee at the Oct 29, 2013, Committee meeting and an excerpt is attached to this report (Attachment 7).

Option 2 - Select a preferred site prior to issuing the RFEOI (Not Recommended)

A preferred site could be chosen in advance of the RFEOI based on the site evaluation presented in this report. The RFEOI could then be issued specifically identifying a site. The

preferred site, chosen according to the site evaluation included in this report, is Woodward's Landing since it satisfies eight of the nine criteria.

In the case of either option, a community consultation process will be conducted to both inform the community about the project and to test the community's acceptance of the chosen site. The consultation should occur prior to moving forward with a Request for Proposal, which will identify the site for the memorial garden.

Next Steps

The following process to advance the Community Memorial Garden project as described in Option 1 is proposed:

1. Issue a Request for Expression of Interest to test the feasibility of a private sector proponent engaging with the City of Richmond to develop and operate the Community Memorial Garden and to determine the suitability of the candidate sites;
2. Report back to Council with a short list of proponents and a recommended site to be included in the future Request for Proposal phase;
3. Conduct a community consultation process regarding the proposed Community Memorial Garden; and
4. Report back to Council with an implementation strategy including an overview of the Request for Proposal.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

Conclusion

According to the recommendations of the Memorial Garden Feasibility Study, a total of 20 City-owned sites have been considered as candidate sites for the proposed Richmond Community Memorial Garden. They have been ranked according to the site selection criteria with five sites offered for Council's consideration.

This report provides two options for advancing the project with **Option 1 - Issue the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEIO) including a short-list of candidate sites** recommended for Council's consideration. This option would provide the City with additional evaluation of the candidate sites from a market perspective to add to the input already received. A potential site can then be selected for further community consultation and for inclusion in the Request for Proposal. The results of the process described in Option 1 would be the subject of a future report to Council.



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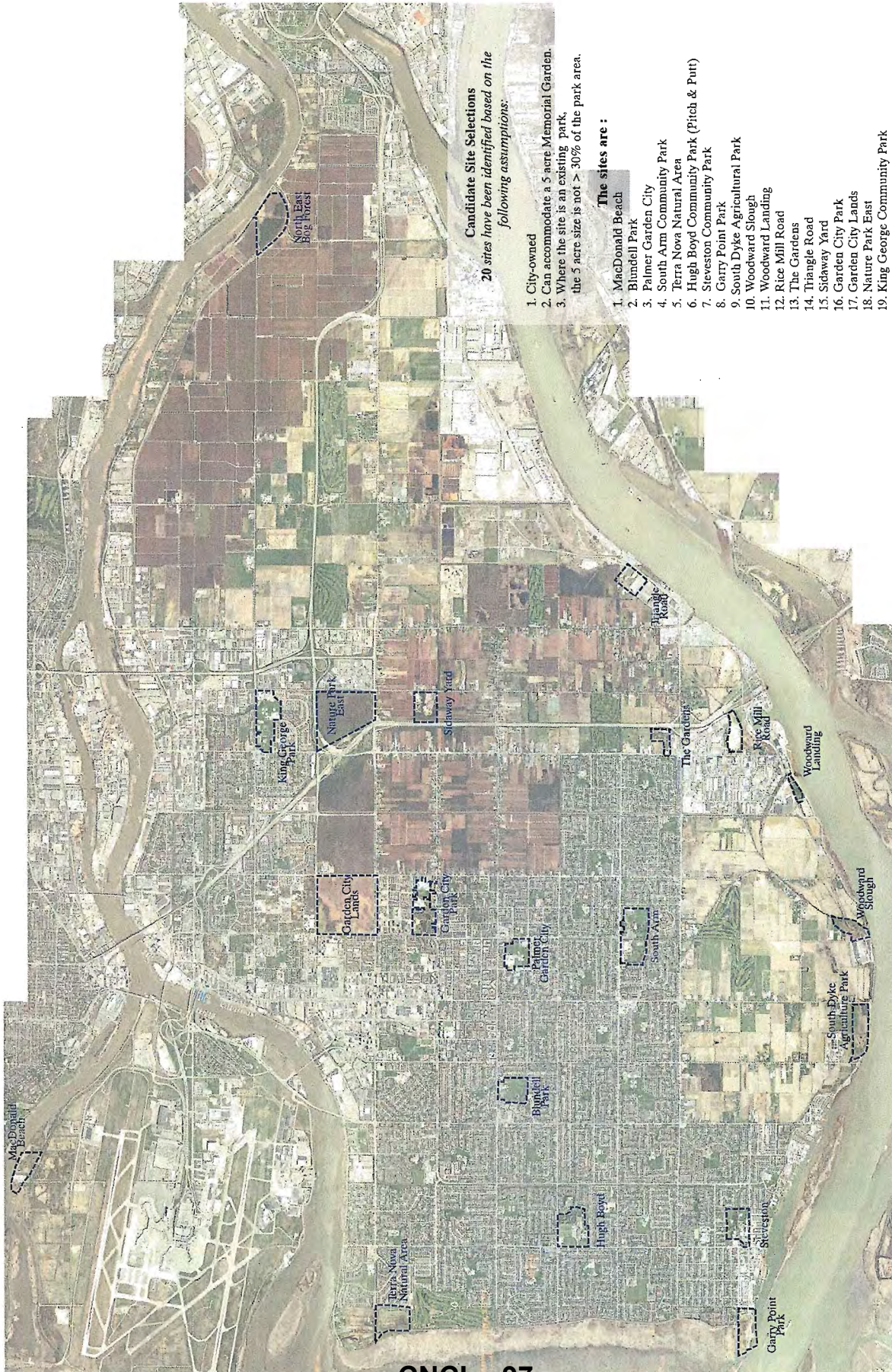
- Attachment 1 – Representative Memorial Garden Images
- Attachment 2 – Community Memorial Garden Candidate Site Evaluation
- Attachment 3 – Woodward’s Landing Park
- Attachment 4 – South Dyke Agricultural Park
- Attachment 5 – Richmond Nature Park East
- Attachment 6 – North East Bog Forest
- Attachment 7 - Expression of Interest Overview

Attachment 1

Representative Memorial Garden Images

These images show the types of services and the types of landscapes that could be offered at a memorial garden in Richmond.





Candidate Site Selections

20 sites have been identified based on the following assumptions:

1. City-owned
2. Can accommodate a 5 acre Memorial Garden.
3. Where the site is an existing park the 5 acre size is not > 30% of the park area.

The sites are :

1. MacDonalld Beach
2. Blimdel Park
3. Palmer Garden City
4. South Arm Community Park
5. Terra Nova Natural Area
6. Hugh Boyd Community Park (Pitch & Putt)
7. Steveston Community Park
8. Garry Point Park
9. South Dyke Agricultural Park
10. Woodward Slough
11. Woodward Slough
12. Rice Mill Road
13. The Gardens
14. Triangle Road
15. Sidway Yard
16. Garden City Park
17. Garden City Lands
18. Nature Park East
19. King George Community Park
20. North East Bog Forest



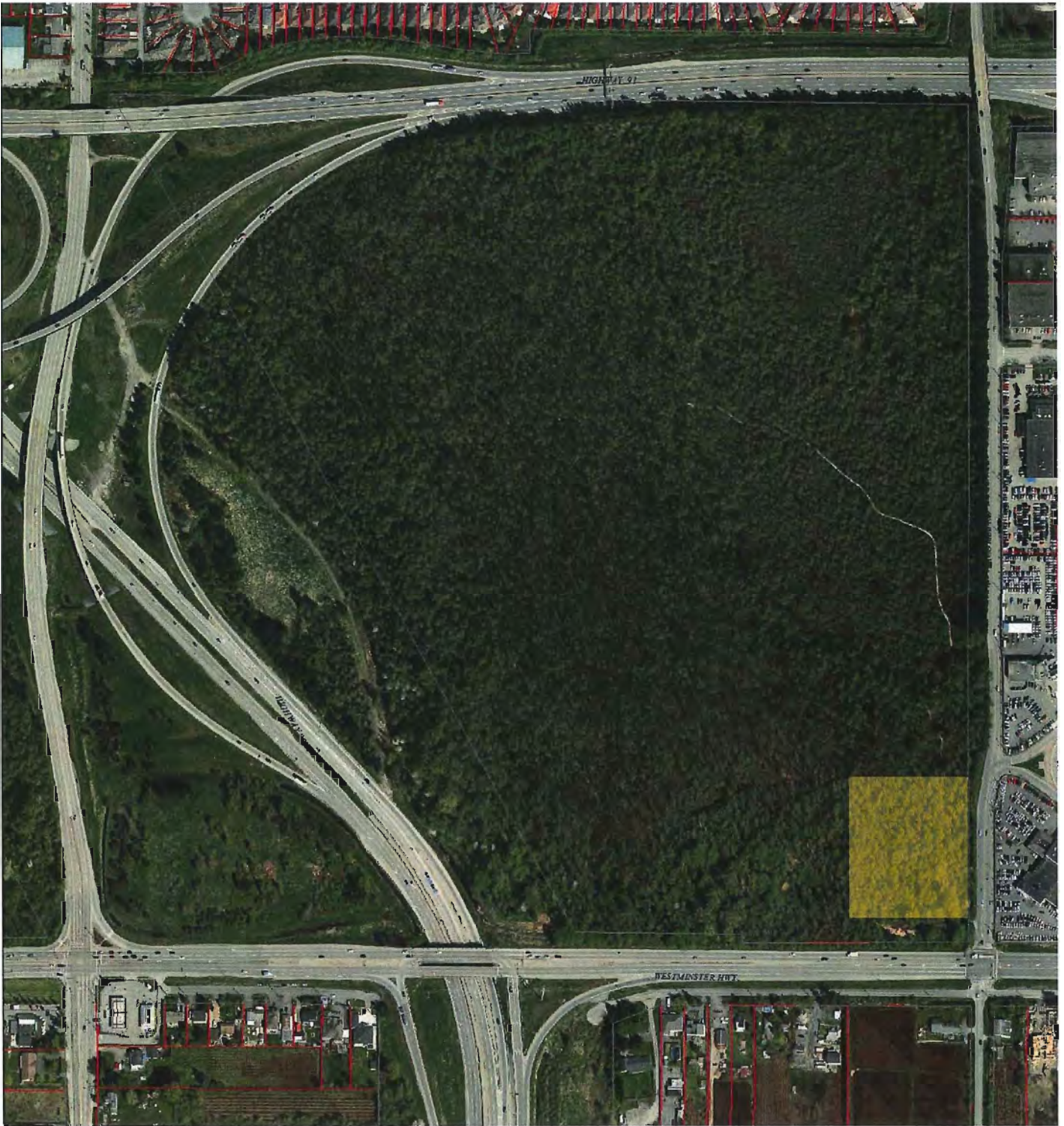
Size: 6.25 acres

Woodward's Landing Park



 Approx. location of a 5 acre area

South Dyke Agricultural Park



Approx. location of a 5 acre area

Richmond Nature Park East



 Approx. location of a 5 acre area

North East Bog Forest

Richmond Community Memorial Garden Expression of Interest Overview

The purpose of the EOI will be to inform potential proponents of the opportunity to engage with the City of Richmond to develop and operate a memorial garden. The EOI will outline the type of information the City is seeking from the marketplace and solicit proposals for the services described. The proponents will be evaluated on their capabilities and expertise including organizational and technical capacity, qualifications relevant to the development and operation of this type of facility, and experience of key staff members.

The EOI will provide general background about the City, including demographic information, a description of the Woodward Landing site, as well as a summary of the feasibility study results. It will describe the desired range of memorial garden services identified through the feasibility study, which includes both community and individual memorialisation and accommodation of diverse religious and cultural traditions.

The development scope and the financial and governance relationship between the City and the operator will be outlined in general terms but it is expected that the EOI submissions will propose options for governance and business terms in greater detail for the City's consideration. These terms will be a key part of the evaluation of the EOI submissions.

The EOI submissions will be used to prepare a short list of the most qualified proponents that will subsequently be included in a Request for Proposal (RFP) call for the development (design and construction) and operation of the memorial garden.