



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: PRCS - March 26 2013

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

From: Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks

Re: King George Park Master Plan Update

Date: March 4, 2013

File: 06-2345-20-
KGEO1/Vol 01

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report "King George Park Master Plan Update" dated March 4, 2013 from the Senior Manager, Parks be endorsed as the guide for future development of King George Park.

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

Att: 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Recreation Services	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY DIRECTORS	INITIALS:	REVIEWED BY CAO	INITIALS:

Staff Report

Origin

In 1994, a comprehensive Parks Master Plan was developed for King George Park. This plan was developed to integrate the City and Richmond School District No. 38 lands acquired for the construction of McNeely Elementary School, the Cambie Community Centre/High School complex and additional community park space to meet the growing population needs.

Park development during the following five years included sports fields, a children's play area with a popular spray pool, trails, a caretaker/washroom building and other support infrastructure. In 2008, a field was converted to a lit artificial turf field and, in 2009, the Richmond Rugby Football Club moved their change room facilities from Sea Island to King George Park making the park their home base.

This report meets the Council term goal of Managing Growth and Development:

7.2 Develop a plan to ensure the provision of public facilities and services keeps up with the rate of growth and changing demographics of the community (families, older adults, increasing cultural diversity)

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the features of the King George Park Master Plan Update Plan and seek endorsement of the plan for the future development of King George Park.

Analysis

Background

In late 2010, the East Richmond Community Association and the City identified the need to undertake an update of the 1994 master plan to address a number of issues that had emerged over the years. It was determined that a full detailed master planning process was not required as King George Park is already rich in many existing community assets. Instead, the park planning process was undertaken to look at how to improve upon the success of the park to ensure that present day and future community needs will be met.

The planning process was conducted using a Place-making approach that looked at how to make the park alive and dynamic, a place where people meet and mingle, celebrate, relax, learn and are active. As 'great places' are important to building a sense of community, the goal was to answer the question "what makes a great park?" for users of King George Park.

City staff worked closely with the East Richmond Community Association park committee to identify issues and to conduct a public input process. In 2011, a survey was distributed in the park, local library, community center, and information outlining the issues and opportunities were presented at a summer movie night and the successful Earth Day event in 2012.

As a result of the site analysis and public input three overarching areas of concern were identified (Att. 1- Site Analysis 1). These three areas are identified below:

a. Identity and Access:

Cambie Road is considered the front door of King George Park. Concerns were expressed about the lack of identity along the major roads, unclear access into the park and no clear directions or information about the range of facilities. Visual chaos, overgrown planting areas, and a lack of signage made it difficult for newcomers to orient themselves. No. 5 Road presents a pleasant park edge with the larger trees, however, the street is very busy, the sidewalk is narrow, and the entrance to the popular picnic area is not well-defined.

b. Park Amenities:

As one of Richmond's largest community parks, it is well-used with many amenities. There was high general satisfaction of the park amenities. Over 41% of the respondents said that their favourite place was the children's play area followed by the paths and walking as an activity. The picnic area and opportunities to socialize with friends and family were often mentioned. Respondents indicated that they would like to see better management and maintenance of the washrooms and wooded areas, improvement to the sports fields, as well as picnic area.

c. The South Woodlot and Cambie Hollow:

The Woodlot is a 2.2 acre area along the south edge of the park. While the large trees form a nice backdrop to the open grass spaces, the overgrown shrubs created a safety concern and many of them were invasive species such as blackberries. This area had become a 'no-go' zone for the adjacent elementary school children and did little to add to the park experience.

The Cambie Hollow is a small area of mature trees in front of the Cambie Community Centre. It is a remnant of Bath Slough and connected through a pipe to the open slough across the road that acts as a drainage canal and trail connection to the North Arm of the Fraser River. The Hollow was overgrown with invasive species that reduced visibility to the Community Centre from the Cambie Road and did little to enhance the 'front door' of the Centre.

The 10 Year Concept Plan

A number of opportunities were identified to address the three areas of concern. The 10 Year vision and conceptual design plan was developed that looked at seven (7) priority focus areas for improvement (Att.1- Concept Plan 2). This plan and illustrative examples are intended to guide development as opportunities arise. It is expected that the plan would be reviewed in another 10 years to determine if community needs and/or priorities have changed.

The concept plan includes the following seven (7) focus areas for potential development:

1. Edges and Identity

The main park edges along No. 5 Road and Cambie Road are proposed to be upgraded with a more regular urban street tree edge. This approach will give the park a stronger presence along the streets and through the removal of the remnant shrub borders visibility into the park will be improved.

Other vertical identity elements such as public art features, distinct signage and custom bus shelters would all add identity and interest to the major access points into the park. An identity or 'look' for the park can also be reinforced with consistent park furnishings, wayfinding signage, interpretation and stories about the history of the area and the community, community art projects with local schools.

2. Wayfinding and Information

Three types of signage are proposed and include:

- Street edge signs for parks and facility identification;
- Internal directional signs at the pedestrian arrival locations that provide information about the amenities and facilities in the park; and
- Path distance markers and location markers.

3. Paths and Seating

The park survey and observation of the uses in the park show that the paths are exceptionally well used and enjoyed. Users strongly supported the idea of expanding the range of walking paths and experiences along the way as well as ensuring that there were a continuous path loop, all-weather shelters, and social gathering areas. The park update plan proposes completing the path loop on the east side of the park as well as widening it and creating multiple seating opportunities.

4. Picnic and Play Area

This area of the park could easily be called the 'heart' of the park. Many people identified this as their favourite area for the intergenerational uses and the programmed community gathering events. The update plan proposes to expand the picnic opportunities with more grouped picnic tables as well as a series of smaller shelters for gathering and seating.

Along No. 5 Road a more distinct park gateway entry and safe pedestrian arrival node is proposed to compliment the new pedestrian operated cross-walk.

5. Woodlot

This area was identified very early in the process as a major area of concern. In late 2011 and early 2012, city crews began to remove the heavy overgrown invasive shrub layer as well as the hazardous and weak trees within the woodlot. Once the area was opened new soft trails were built through the woodlot and for the first time people were able to access and enjoy the woods. The local schools now want to adopt the area and staff is working with them on identifying park beautification projects. The plan calls for constructing a reading circle and whimsical small play features along the pathways such as stepping stones or logs.

6. Cambie Hollow

The Hollow, a wooded area with major conifer trees, was also cleared and cleaned up during Earth Day 2012. Paths were built around the perimeter of the hollow and it has become a charming entrance feature for Cambie Community Centre. Future plans call for the addition of picnic tables and benches. Staff is working with a community group to adopt the area and add more planting.

7. The East Richmond Community Centre Plaza

A new multi-use plaza area has been proposed recognizing that this would likely be a long term vision. The conceptual design provides outdoor gathering space for the Community Centre that includes sheltered seating areas, multi-purpose hard surface space for casual outdoor games, and infrastructure for festivals and events.

The sports fields in the park were reviewed during this process and it was determined that the existing configuration or footprint of the fields would not be altered at this time. In the future if field upgrades were required and funding was in place, it would be feasible to upgrade the existing rugby/soccer sand field and baseball diamond into one large artificial turf field. Further discussion is required to determine the need and potential partnerships.

Projects Completed to Date

While the park plan update process was underway a number of opportunities arose to undertake a few projects that had an immediate positive impact in the park. The first project was the removal of older banners on Cambie Road and the addition of new vibrant banners with photographic images of community park uses.

One of the strategies to implement and reduce the maintenance costs associated with the 'no pesticide use' in parks, was the corresponding removal of shrub beds throughout the City. Many of the overgrown planting beds along Cambie Road were removed resulting in less visual chaos and much better visibility to the facilities and access driveways. This also became an opportunity to clean up the Hollow and the Woodlot areas that had been both unsightly and a safety concern. It was then determined that King George Park would be a good location for

Earth Day in 2012, and projects included the planting of the Hollow and Woodlot with native plants, and the removal of invasive plants from Bath Slough on the other side of the street. Over 500 community members were involved.

Next Steps

The total proposed cost for the 10 Year Plan is approximately \$2.5 million with the majority of that cost being in the community multi-purpose plaza. The Park Plan will be developed in phases as funding becomes available.

The East Richmond Community Association reviewed the public input, the concept plan and costs, and, together with the City, it was determined that the next priority for improvements in the park is to create a continuous trail loop, add distance markers for the many walkers and more seating along the trails. They have also committed to providing funding to support these developments.

The next steps include the detailed design of this trail, the signage, and the seating areas with construction to be completed by 2013.

Financial Impact

A budget of \$200,000 was approved by Council in 2012 as part of the 2013 Capital Budget. The East Richmond Community Association has also passed a motion to contribute a minimum of \$24,000 to \$50,000 towards the construction of the pathways and seating (Attachment 2).

Conclusion

King George Park is one of the City's largest community parks. The last plan for the park was developed in 1994 and it was determined that an update was required to ensure that community needs are still being met. There is generally a high satisfaction with the park and the recent improvements of adding banners, and clearing the Woodlot and Hollow areas has opened up previously unused and unsafe spaces. Opportunities to socialize and walk for health are extremely important in this community. The next priority for development is completing the trail system and providing more opportunities for seating. The King George Park Update is intended as a guide for any potential future development and will be reviewed in 10 years.



Yvonne Stich
Park Planner
(604-233-3310)

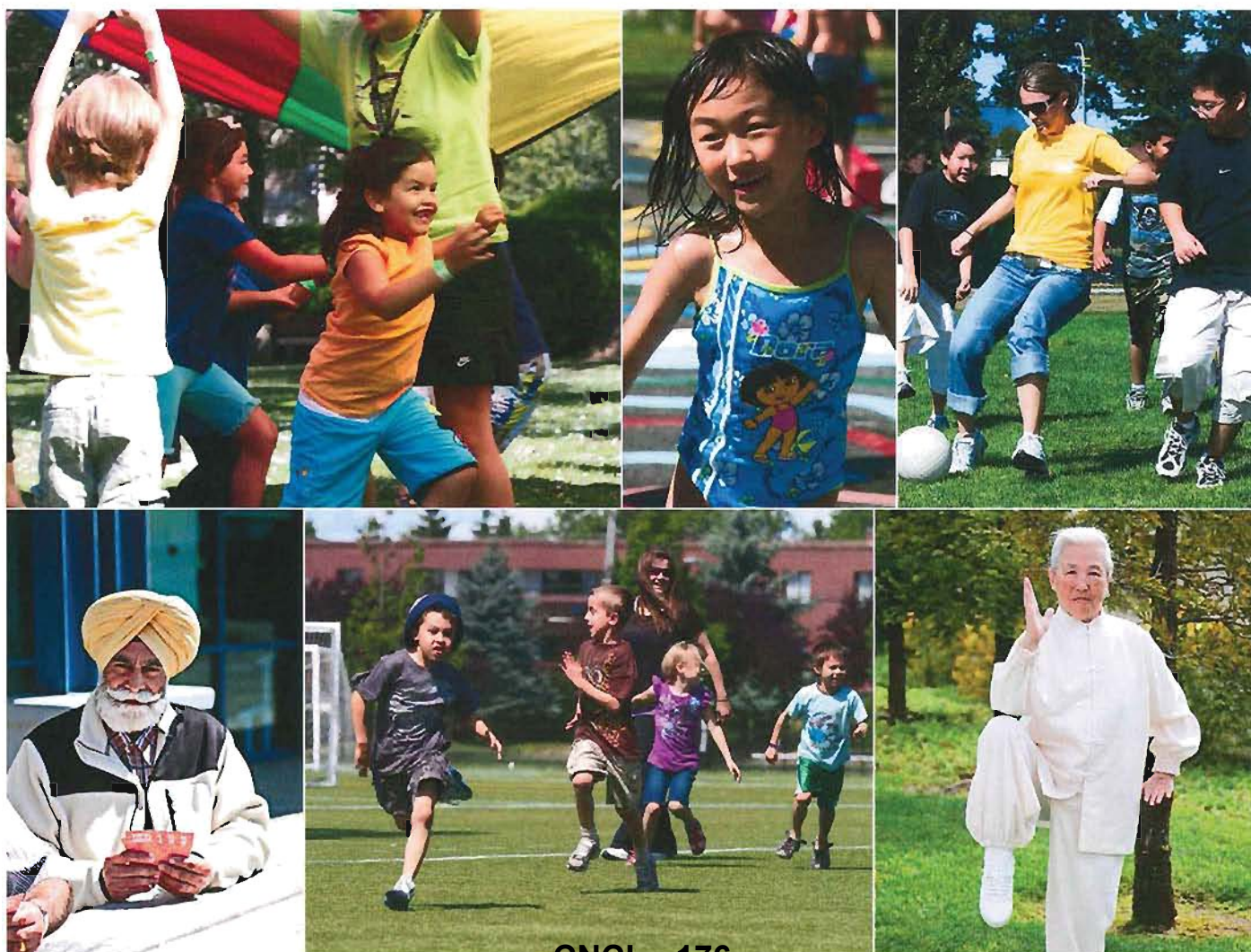
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KING GEORGE PARK

Master Plan Update

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PARK?

The City, together with the East Richmond Community Association, is updating the park master plan to ensure it meets the needs of the community.



KING GEORGE PARK

Master Plan Update

SITE ANALYSIS

1

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PARK?

What would make King George Park a 'Great Community Park'? The City and the East Richmond Community Association want your ideas.

1. Tell us about your favourite things to do in the park and what you like about the existing park.

2. What is missing to make King George Park a great park? What needs to be improved or added?



For more information, please contact the Parks Department at 604-244-1208 or Gamble Community Centre at gamble@richmondc.ca or call 604-233-9373.



KING GEORGE PARK

Master Plan Update

A IDENTITY AND ACCESS

'ARRIVING AT THE PARK' - STREET EDGE IMPROVEMENTS

A. CAMBIE ROAD

This is the main 'face' or the 'front door' of King George Park. This is how many people arrive to the park and the facilities.

ISSUES

Lack of identity and information

Where is the park? Where are the facilities?

- Lack of signage/ information about park facilities
- Poor visibility of parking lot driveways
- Visual chaos
- Overgrown and inconsistent landscaping
- Underdeveloped major intersection corners e.g. Centre building appears to have its back to the corner



Poor visibility of park entrances



Visually chaotic



Major intersection - no signage and 'back' end of building



Overgrown and inconsistent landscaping



Lack clear of signage and information

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B. NO. 5 ROAD

A very pleasant edge to the park and entry to some of the most popular and successful areas such as the picnic and play areas.

ISSUES

- Limited view of the park and sense of all the park has to offer
- Lack of signage and information – where is the entrance?
- Busy and condensed vehicular traffic area
- Commercial use on corner blocks views into park

OPPORTUNITIES/ IDEAS

Improve the 'sense of arrival' for visitors

- Develop a Wayfinding Signage System
- Provide clear information on parking lot entrances, building locations and amenities in the park.
- Redevelop the No. 5 Road edge with a larger and clear entry feature by the new crosswalk.
- Improve the corner of Jacombs and Cambie Road both with landscaping and potential building signage.

Improve visibility into the park and to the facilities

- Develop a cohesive landscaping treatment for the street edges
- Remove overgrown shrub beds that are limiting visibility
- Remove trees that have been damaged by excessive pruning for hydro lines.

Develop an identity or 'look' for the park

- Create a consistent and recognizable look to all the park furnishings e.g. wayfinding signage, the bollards, fences, benches and garbage cans reinforce.
- Provide interpretation- stories about the history of the area, park and people of the neighbourhood.
- Work with community and school children to create community art for the park.



Nighttime features



Treelined street



Making art in the park



Unique site furnishings



Gateway entrance features

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B PARK AMENITIES

'GREAT PLACES AND GREAT EXPERIENCES'

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PARK?

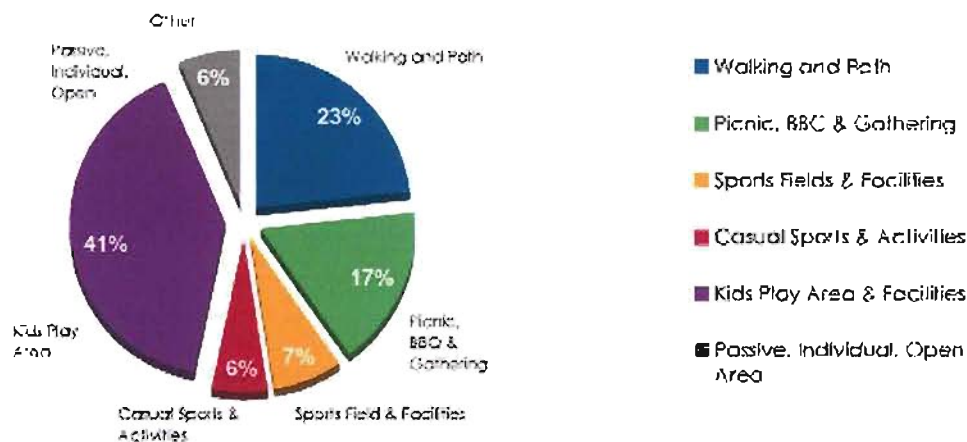
King George Park, at 48.2 acres, is one of Richmond's largest community parks acres. It is a well-used park with many amenities and building facilities on site. The goal is to 'tweak' it to make it even better!

HERE IS WHAT YOU SAID...

A park survey was conducted over the Spring months asking the public what would make a great park. Here are the results:

Question #1

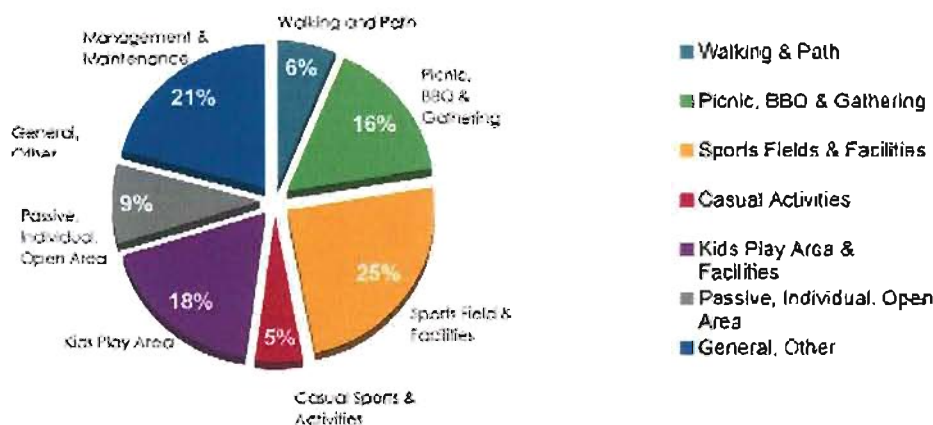
Tell us about your favourite things to do in the park and what you like about the existing park.



Gathering spaces for passive recreation

Question #2

What is missing to make King George Park a great Park? What needs to be improved or added?



Sport fields and facilities

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OPPORTUNITIES / IDEAS

Improve the pathway system

- create a complete continuous pathway
- widen the north pathway adjacent to Cambie Road
- provide a walking map and distance markers

Make the park more comfortable for users

- Provide more seating areas – benches and outdoor chairs
- Provide spectator seating for the sports fields
- Provide covered areas
- Improve safety by reducing, relocating or removing overgrown shrub beds

Improve the picnic area/play area

- Review the number and location of picnic tables/seating areas
- Integrate the different amenities together
- Improve the drainage
- Assess the health of the trees and develop a plan for future trees
- Remove and/ or simplify the shrub borders for safety and improved aesthetics

Locate a ball hockey court within the park

- Review potential to retrofit one basketball court to this use

Improve the park for festivals and events

- Determine what infrastructure is required to support festivals or major events in the park



Benches and seating options



Chairs and movable furniture



Walking park paths



Unique play elements



Improved picnic shelter

Improve the overall landscaping

- Redesign, reduce or remove shrub borders that are unsightly or a safety concern
- Work with community on adopt-a-park programs to assist with maintenance



Ball hockey court



Night features

KING GEORGE PARK

Master Plan Update

C THE WOODLOT AND CAMBIE HOLLOW

'INTEGRATING NATURE INTO THE PARK'

THE CAMBIE HOLLOW

A small environmentally sensitive area along Cambie Road in front of the Community Centre. Pleasant with mature trees.

This is a remnant of Bath Slough and is connected to the slough across the street.

ISSUES

- Overgrown with invasive weeds
- Overgrown shrubs that reduce visibility to driveways and the community centre
- Underutilized area

OPPORTUNITIES/IDEAS

Environmental Enhancement Grant

- The Community Association has received money to improve the environmental quality of the hollow.
- Engage students in a clean up and replanting with native plants

Develop a recreational use and improve the aesthetics

- Construct a boardwalk or bridge

Interpret the slough connection

- Provide interpretation through signage or public art



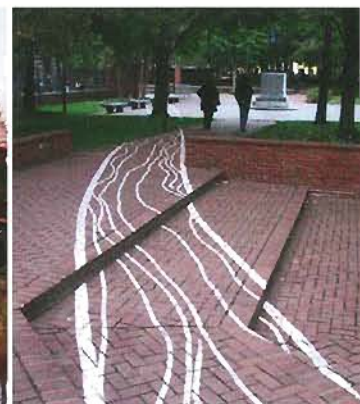
The Hollow - Part of Bath Slough



Aerial view of Bath Slough from Cambie Road to Fraser River



Bridge over The Hollow



Interpret of original slough location



Environmental interpretation through art

KING GEORGE PARK

Master Plan Update

SOUTH WOODLOT

The wood lot is a 2.2 acre site along the south edge of the park. It is designated an environmentally sensitive area and provides a beautiful backdrop in the park.

ISSUES:

- Safety is the number one concern e.g. people camping or lurking
- wooded area is not maintained
- hazardous trees make it unsafe to enter
- overgrown with invasive plants
- not designated pathways through it
- overall uninviting and not well integrated into the park

OPPORTUNITIES/IDEAS

Turn this woodlot into a positive asset in the park by:

Making it safer

- opening up views into the woodlot
- improve visibility within the woodlot by selectively removing overgrown shrubs
- replant with low growing plants

Making it environmentally healthier

- remove invasive plants to improve the ecology of the woodlot
- remove hazardous trees
- replant with native plants

Adding recreational use

- built clear trails through the area
- soften the edges to make it part of the overall park



Involving the community on Earth Day / invasive removal



North side of woodlot



Wildlife



Invasive plants



Control access through woodlot



Develop wide trails



Clearing and access



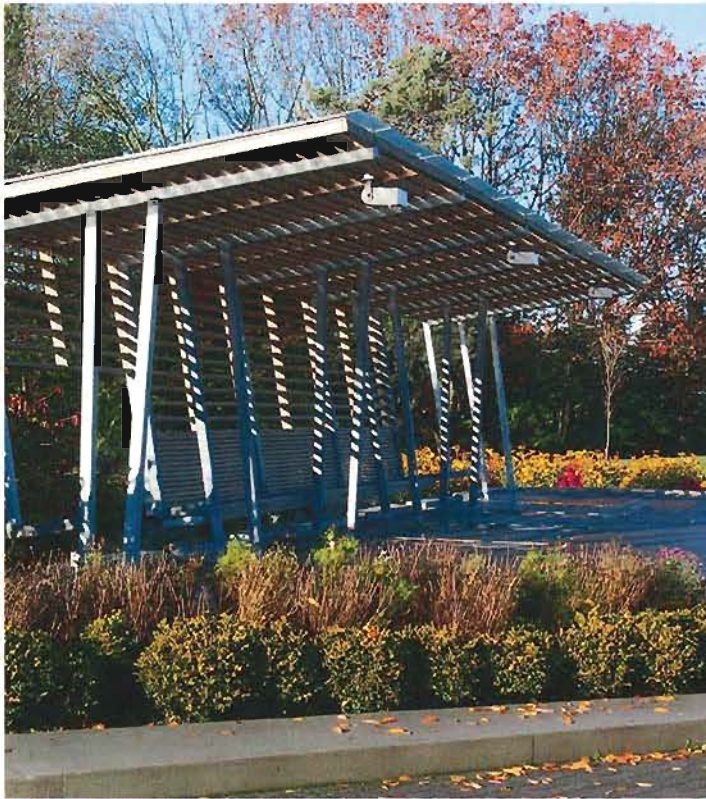
Replant with native plantings

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7 FOCUS AREAS

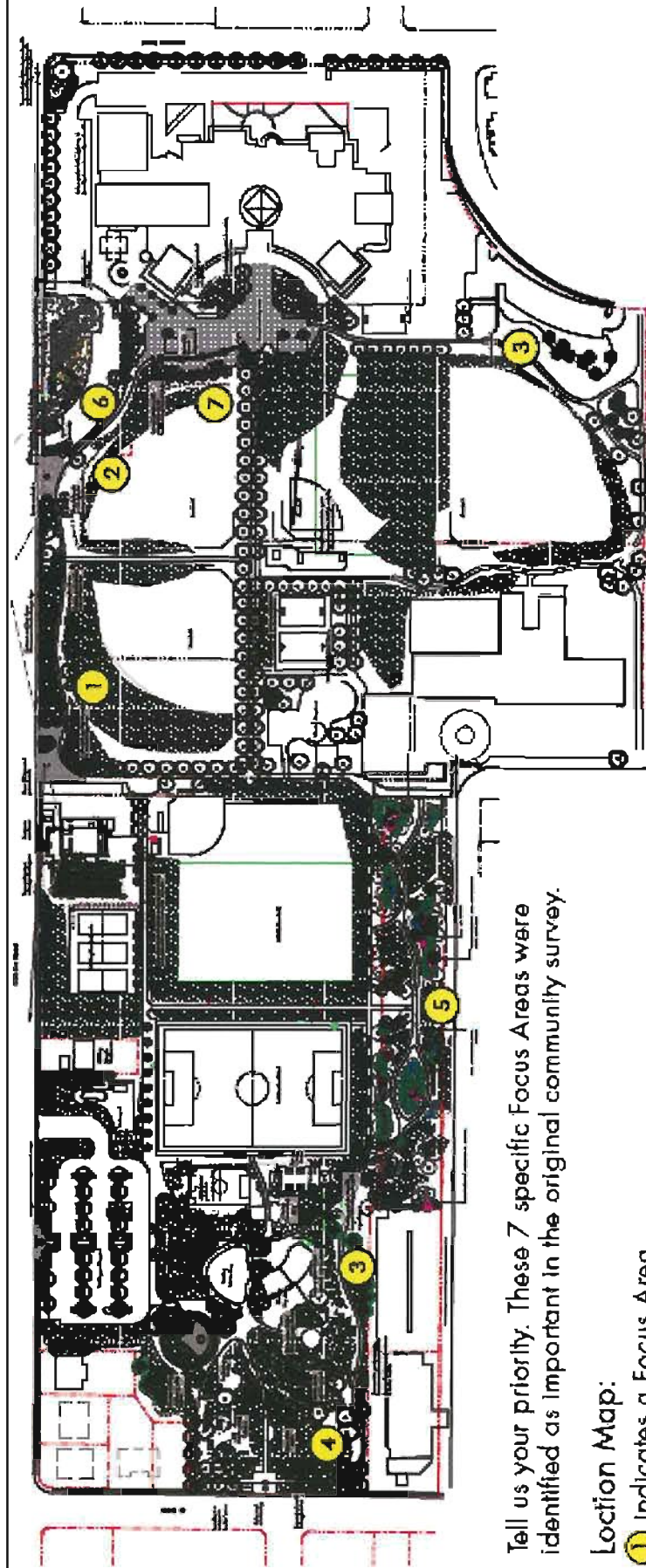
CONCEPT PLAN 2



KING GEORGE PARK

Master Plan Update

THE 10-YEAR PLAN



Tell us your priority. These 7 specific Focus Areas were identified as important in the original community survey.

Location Map:

① Indicates a Focus Area

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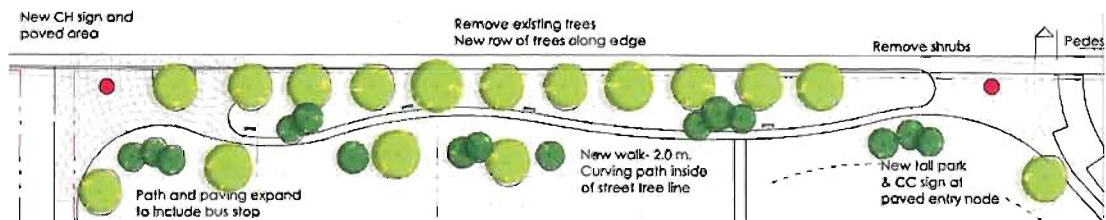
King George Park Master Plan Update

Edges & Identity

1

The two main park edges, along #5 Road and Cambie Road, are proposed to be upgraded with a more regular, urban street tree edge. This approach will give the park itself a stronger presence along the streets, and improve visibility into the park.

Vertical identity elements can be combined with custom bus shelters to add identity and interest to the park access points. Because sightlines to park access points are at very shallow angles, we believe that vertical, rather than horizontal, identity elements will be most effective.

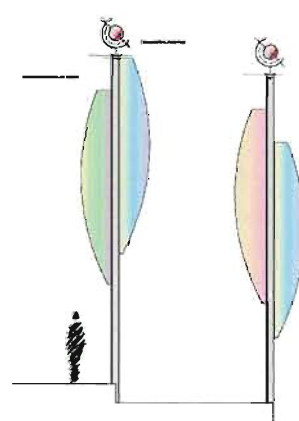


Vertical identity elements

Stronger edges to park



Custom Bus Shelter



KING GEORGE PARK

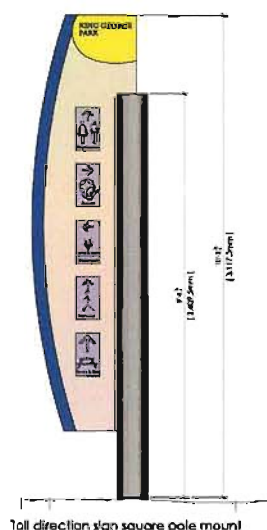
Master Plan Update

King George Park Master Plan Update Wayfinding & Information

2

Three types of signs are proposed:

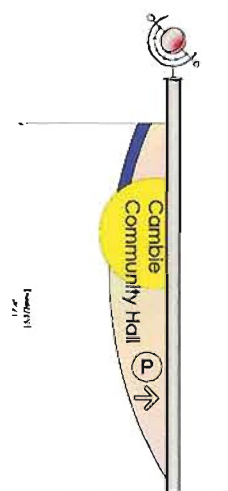
- * Street Edge signs for park and facility identification, along with vehicular oriented instructions.
- * Internal direction signs, at pedestrian arrival locations with directions to specific areas as well as overall park directions.
- * Path and location markers, to note progress around the paths, and provide facility arrival identification and adjacent facility directions.



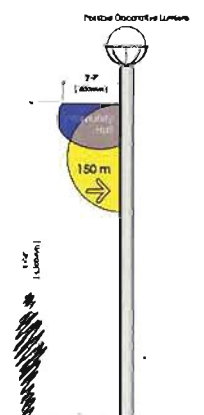
Internal park direction & path markers



Distance marker or place identity



Simplified Vertical Sign, Vertical Graphics



Potential Advance Notice Sign, at Medalla Blade approx. 100 m Advance

Street edge signs and advance notice signs

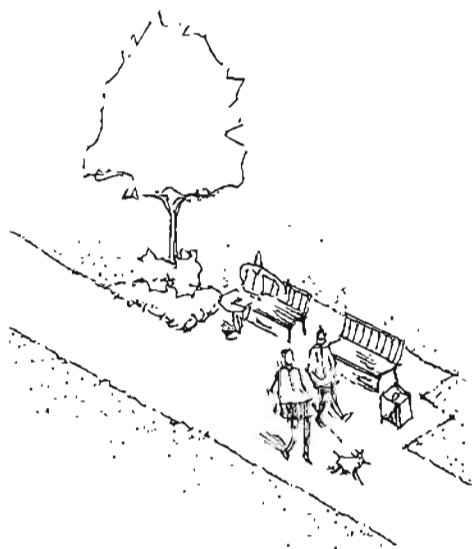
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King George Park Master Plan Update

Paths & Seating

3



All of the park survey responses and park-user comments show that the paths are exceptionally well used and enjoyed.

Users strongly supported the ideas of expanding the range of walking paths to extend distances and expand the range of experiences that may be found along the paths.

Users requests also showed that improved seating options, such as benches, shelters, and social table areas, would be a valuable upgrade.

The park update plan proposes expansion of the loop path, as well as widening it and adding seating and shelters.



Open trellis & bench clusters



Widen existing paths to 2m - 3m



Table groups adjacent to activity areas



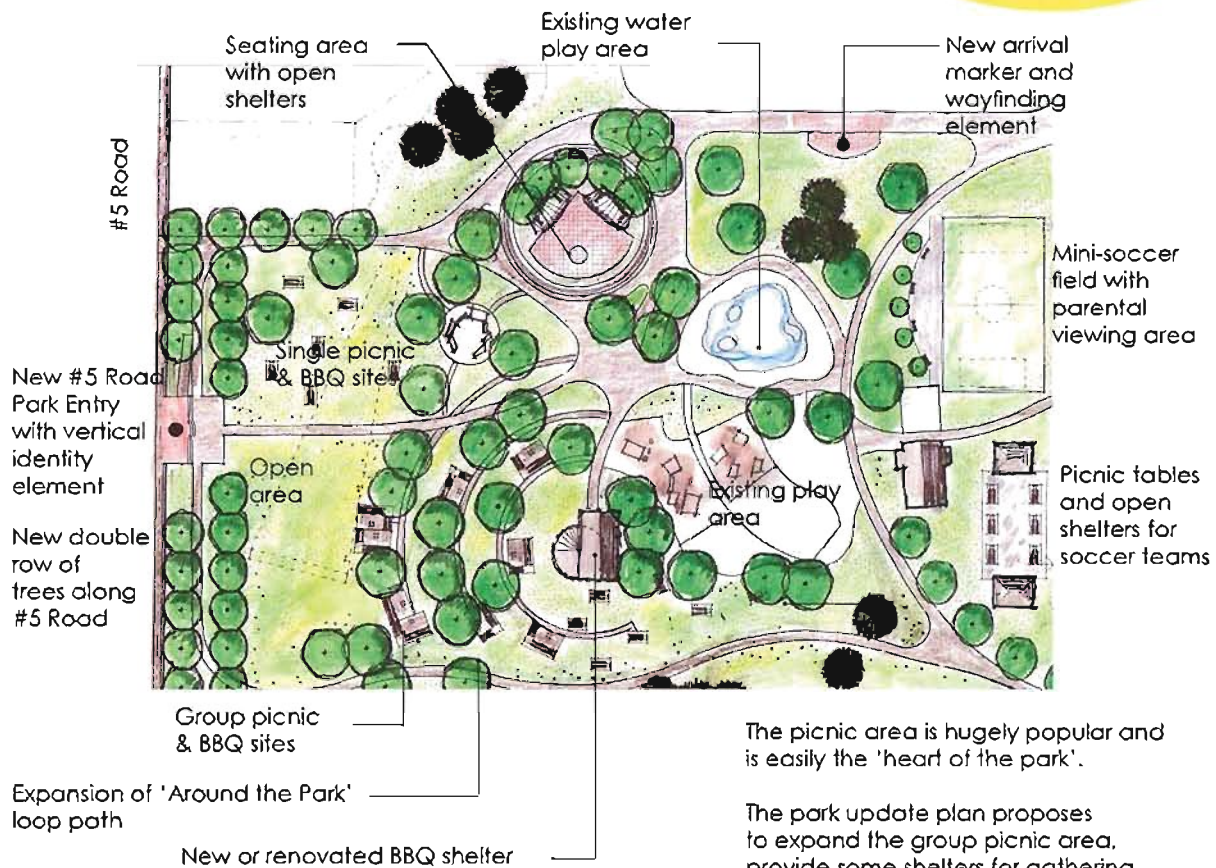
Flexible seating

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King George Park Master Plan Update Picnic and Play Area

4



The picnic area is hugely popular and is easily the 'heart of the park'.

The park update plan proposes to expand the group picnic area, provide some shelters for gathering and seating, and add some tables and shelters for the soccer field. A new, more formal tree-lined edge will soften #5 Road, and a new park entry and pedestrian arrival node with a tall, vertical identity element will compliment the new pedestrian-operated light.



Vertical element at arrival



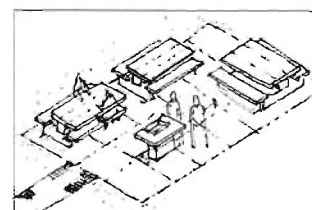
Possible BBQ shelter



Open seating shelters



Movie night space retained



Group picnic setting with BBQ stand

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King George Park Master Plan Update Wood Lot

5



casual, curving paths



Stilt walk



log & stump walk



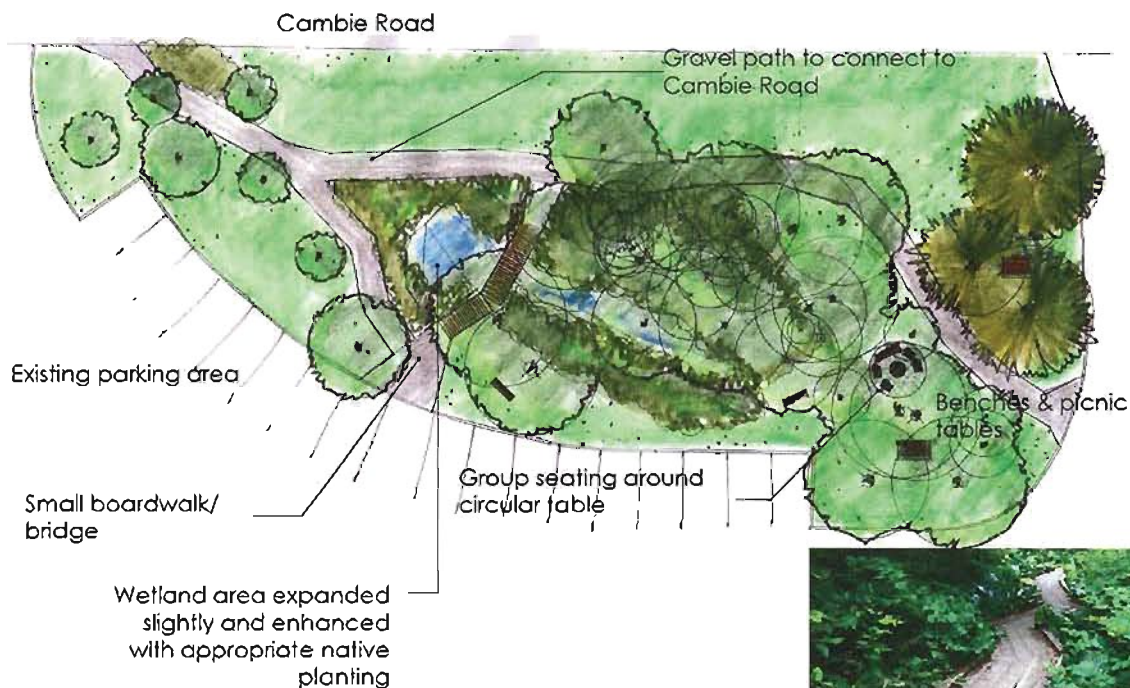
Creative seating options

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King George Park Master Plan Update Cambie Hollow

6



The Cambie Hollow area is being cleaned to allow enhancement of the wet area that once was part of Bath Slough. New paths, tables and social seating areas are planned, along with gravel walks and enhanced native planting.

Visibility to the ERCA building as well as increased usability and pedestrian comfort will be achieved.



Low, native plants and small boardwalk

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Master Plan Update

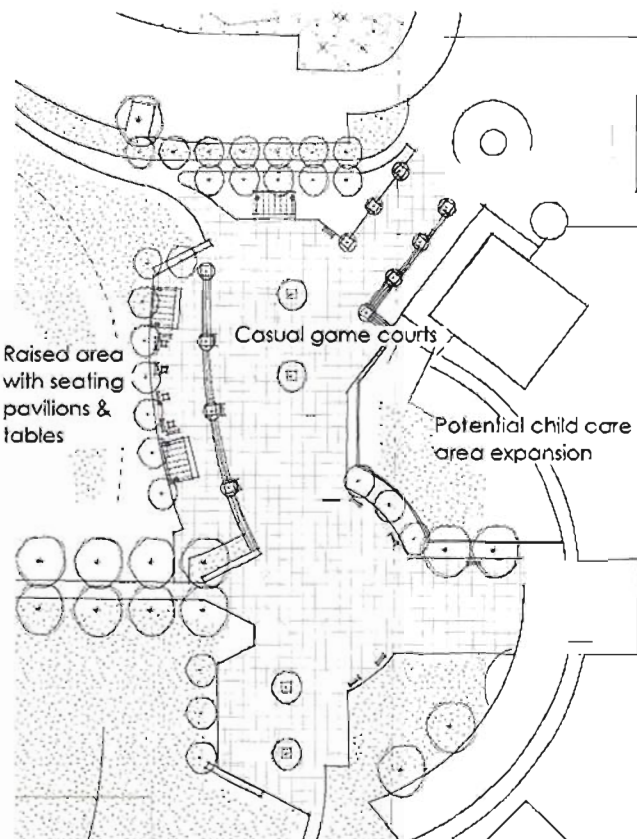
King George Park Master Plan Update ERCC Plaza

7

Between the ERCC/ High School, the update plan proposes a new multi-use plaza, that will accommodate open and covered seating areas, space for casual court games as well as provide outdoor space for the Community Centre and the school to use. The plaza will respond to the build form, and create a logical link with the elegant central treed axis of the park.



Covered seating pavilions



Tai chi



Casual use built-in tables



Architectural seating

KING GEORGE PARK

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SHELTERS



**fun
function**



PUBLIC ART



GATEWAY



BENCHES



East Richmond Community Association

December 19, 2012

Mr. Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks
City of Richmond
5555 Lynas Lane
Richmond, BC V7C 5B2

Re: King George Park

Dear Mike,

On behalf of the East Richmond Community Association (ERCA) I would like to thank the City in general and the Parks Department in particular for contributing to the on-going improvements in King George Park (KGP). This park has become one of the major attractions in the area and is well utilized by the community for a variety of activities that help keep people active, healthy and connected.

Over the past two years, our ERCA board members and Cambie staff have had a number of meetings with the City Park's staff in regards to the King George Park Plan Update. We have found these meetings to be extremely beneficial, as we have collectively identified what the community likes about the park and how the community would like to see the park enhanced. After compiling the community feedback, Parks staff provided ERCA with recommendations on seven focus areas to consider for the park plan update and asked the association to help prioritize these areas. Parks staff also recently confirmed that they had set aside \$200,000 in the 2013 budget for improvements to King George Park.

At a special Board of Director's meeting on December 11, 2012, ERCA decided that Option #3 focus area "Pathways and Seating" should be the number one priority for 2013. Please see our two meeting motions below referencing our decision, request of additional information and contribution commitment.

MOTION. The ERCA Board selects Option #3: "Pathways and Seating", as the area of focus for 2013. The Board requests that the City provide them with a more detailed outline, including drawings and estimate plans.

MOTION. That, subject to our ability to pay, the ERCA will contribute a minimum of \$24,000 up to a maximum of \$50,000 toward the King George Park Plan.

On behalf of the ERCA Board I would like to request that the City provide us with a more detailed outline including drawings and estimate plans for Option #3 Pathways and Seating. Also, subject to ERCA Board's ability to pay we will contribute a minimum of \$24,000 to a maximum of \$50,000 toward the King George Park Plan in 2013.

Please feel free to contact me at 604-836-8976 if you need more information in this regard.

Sincerely,

Balwant Sanghera
President
BS:sea

cc Dave Semple, General Manager, Community Services
cc Vern Jacques, Senior Manager, Recreation Services
cc Elizabeth Ayers, Manager, Recreation Services
cc Sue Varley, Area Coordinator, Cambie Community Centre

CNCL - 194