



## Staff Report

### Origin

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

#### *#2.7 Completion of the Memorial Garden Project*

In a previous report, the conclusions of a feasibility study regarding the establishment of a memorial garden in Richmond and the recommendation of the Woodward's Landing Park site as the preferred location for the facility were approved by Council. In addition, staff were directed to work with the Fraser Delta Girl Guides to find an alternate site for their programs. Staff were also directed to develop the methodology and terms of reference for an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the potential development of a memorial garden at the Woodward's Landing Park site.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the methodology and terms of reference for the Expression of Interest for the development and operation of a memorial garden in Richmond.

### Analysis

#### Background

The desire to have a place for individual and community memorialisation in Richmond has been raised by residents and by Council on numerous occasions. The popularity of the City's bench donation program as a means of memorialisation is another testament to the need for a memorial garden in Richmond. In order to address that need, a feasibility study was completed to test the viability of a memorial garden.

#### *Feasibility Study Summary*

The feasibility study included examination of other facilities as precedents, analysis of the demographics and market forces (e.g., population growth, death rates, and interment preferences) and a statistically significant telephone survey that confirmed there is strong demand for a memorial garden in Richmond. A set of criteria were developed to evaluate locations for the facility, along with analysis of financial feasibility and governance models.

The study findings are summarized below.

1. Demand for memorial garden services:
  - Full depth, in-ground burials are not feasible in Richmond due to the water table limitations;
  - There is a high level of demand for services for interment of cremated remains in Richmond; and,
  - A slight majority of Richmond residents would prefer to inter their remains and those of their family in Richmond.

2. Site selection:
  - Site selection criteria were developed and confirmed through focus group input;
  - A site that is a minimum of 5 acres is projected to serve the community's needs for the next 40 years; and,
  - A total of 22 sites were evaluated (**Attachment 1**) and, according to the site selection criteria, the Woodward's Landing Park site was selected as the most suitable location.
  
3. Financial feasibility and governance
  - Locating the facility on a city-owned site is essential to the financial feasibility of the memorial garden;
  - Since the City does not have existing capacity to undertake the development and operation of a memorial garden, it is recommended that the City enter into a lease and governance agreement with a private sector entity;
  - As per the BC Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act, a Perpetual Care Fund must be established and held in trust for the long-term maintenance of the facility. The revenues for the fund are derived from a percentage of the revenues from each interment;
  - The business plan for development and operation of the facility will be exclusive of any tax subsidy; and,
  - The City should play an oversight role in the design and operation of the facility to ensure community needs are being met.

The conclusions of the feasibility study were:

- a) That a memorial garden could operate successfully in Richmond; and,
- b) The willingness of the private sector to engage with the City should be tested through an Expression of Interest seeking qualified and interested proponents capable of developing and operating a memorial garden.

In 2012, the feasibility study conclusions were reviewed and were confirmed to still be valid.

### **Expression of Interest**

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.

### **Next Steps**

#### *Woodward's Landing Land Title*

There are several administrative and legal tasks that are underway with regard to the Woodward's Landing property. If the evaluation of the EOI submissions shows that the City's terms can be satisfied, then the following legal requirements to change the land use designation would need to be undertaken:

1. Removal of the park designation from the Woodward's Landing Park site

Since the Woodward's Landing site has been designated as park, the park designation must be removed prior to its use as a memorial garden. Under the terms of the Community Charter (Section 27), the City may close the park at Woodward's Landing with the passage of a bylaw according to the Alternative Approval Process and will be required to transfer the designation of equivalent park area to another location.

2. Transfer the park designation from the Woodward's Landing site to another location

In 2007, staff received authorization to exchange the park designation from Woodward's Landing to Hamilton Highway Park. It is recommended that this decision be reconsidered in light of the Hamilton Area Plan Update process that is underway. The park exchange may present administrative and legal complications that could impede the implementation of the future approved plan.

Alternative locations have been analyzed and 2 parcels at Terra Nova Rural Park have been identified (**Attachment 2**). The properties at 2331 and 2431 Westminster Highway, in the southwest corner of the park, are 4.9 acres and 2.3 acres respectively which is slightly larger in area than the Woodward's Landing site.

3. Establish a place of interment at the Woodward's Landing site

A "Certificate of Public Interest" must be registered with the Land Title Office to establish a place of interment at Woodward's Landing. The memorial garden operator will make the application for the certificate at the appropriate time.

#### 4. Sponsored Crown Grant

The titles for two small parcels, one in the southwest corner of the site and one across Dyke Road, are still held by the Province due to an administrative error. Staff received authorization from Council in 2010 to apply to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands for a Sponsored Crown Grant to transfer title of the properties to the City and have proceeded accordingly. Unfortunately, the Province has not completed the transfer but is expected to do so imminently. While rectifying the situation is desirable, the completion of the transfer is not critical to the development of the memorial garden since neither parcel is critical to the viability of the operation.

#### *Relocation of the Girl Guide Camp*

In 2005, staff were authorized by Council to work with the Fraser Delta Girl Guides and the Nature Park Society to investigate opportunities to relocate the camp to the Nature Park East. Through consultation with the Girl Guides, the Nature Park was determined not to be suitable. The primary reason is that most of the participants in the camp programs are novices and so a more open site is desired for safety reasons.

Further investigation of alternative sites led to the selection of the northwest corner of the Terra Nova Natural Area as the preferred location for the campsite (**Attachment 3**). The City-owned property at 2420 Westminster Highway and the adjacent park area to the east offer over 1 acre of open landscape that can be fenced to control access without negatively affecting public use of the park. The property at 2420 Westminster Highway is not currently being used for park purposes.

Proximity to the many programs and diversity of natural landscapes in both Terra Nova parks plus the proximity to the West Dyke Trail would offer greater opportunities for the Girl Guides than at the Woodward's Landing location. In addition, this arrangement offers opportunities for programming synergies with Parks Programs who are currently running a "Learn to Camp" program that would benefit from a dedicated campsite.

The process to relocate the Girl Guide Camp will begin once the schedule to develop the Woodward Landing site for a memorial garden is established. A detailed plan for relocation, including costs, will be the subject of a future report to Council.

#### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact as a result of the recommendations of this report. If the results of the EOI indicate that the City's terms can be met, then the costs associated with proceeding with the Memorial Garden would be the subject of future reports (e.g., legal costs, development costs, and the cost to relocate the Girl Guide Camp).

#### **Conclusion**

The demand for a memorial garden in Richmond has been quantified through a feasibility study. The Woodward's Landing Park site has been identified as the preferred location since it satisfies the site selection criteria established during the feasibility study.

The designation of the site as a memorial garden will require the passage of a bylaw to close the park and the transfer of the equivalent park area to another location, proposed to be Terra Nova Rural Park.

The issuance of an EOI to the market is intended to solicit interest that will also provide confirmation that the site and type of operation desired are workable. It will provide information on companies that have the capacity and expertise to develop and operate a memorial garden in Richmond. The outcome of the EOI will be a short list of qualified proponents for a subsequent Request for Proposal for the development (design and construction) and operation of the memorial garden. The RFP process will be the subject of a future report to Council.

Concurrent with the process of selecting a developer/operator for the memorial garden, the regulatory and land title issues will be resolved. Once the terms for the development of the memorial garden have been confirmed, including the schedule, the Girl Guide Camp will be relocated.



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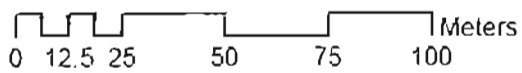




2331

2431

Westminster Hwy



PRCS - 49

Properties Proposed for  
Park Dedication at  
Terra Nova Rural Park





Westminster Hwy

2420

2700



0 10 20 40 60 80 Meters

PRCS - 50

Proposed Camp Site at  
Terra Nova Natural Area