



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Committee

**Date:** March 24, 2022

**From:** Todd Gross  
Director, Parks Services

**File:** 11-7000-01/2022-Vol  
01

**Re:** Sturgeon Bank Eco Walkway

### Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled "Sturgeon Bank Eco Walkway" dated March 24, 2022, from the Director, Parks Services, be received for information.

Todd Gross  
Director, Parks Services  
(604-247-4942)

Att. 4

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>
Engineering Sustainability & District Energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b> 	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 

## Staff Report

### Origin

At the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Committee meeting on November 26, 2019, discussion ensued with regards to constructing an ecology walkway along Sturgeon Bank, and information on the proposed walkway was distributed (Attachment 1). As a result of the discussion, staff received the following referral:

*That the City of Richmond consider building an Eco Walkway out over Sturgeon Bank. A walkway was previously recommended straight out from the West Dyke but the land was crown owned. A smaller walkway was approved in the Richmond Trails Plan in 1979. Richmond now owns the foreshore at Terra Nova.*

The purpose of this report is to provide Council an overview of the technical information regarding the creation of an ecology walkway out over Sturgeon Bank, its requirements and procedure, an analysis of its benefits and risks, and to propose next next steps.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #4 An Active and Thriving Richmond:

*An active and thriving community characterized by diverse social and wellness programs, services and spaces that foster health and well-being for all.*

*4.2 Ensure infrastructure meets changing community needs, current trends and best practices.*

*4.3 Encourage wellness and connection to nature through a network of open spaces.*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #5 Sound Financial Management:

*Accountable, transparent, and responsible financial management that supports the needs of the community into the future.*

*5.4 Work cooperatively and respectfully with all levels of government and stakeholders while advocating for the best interests of Richmond.*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #6 Strategic and Well-Planned Growth:

*Leadership in effective and sustainable growth that supports Richmond's physical and social needs.*

*6.4 Recognize Richmond's history and heritage through preservation, protection and interpretation.*

## Analysis

### Location and Site Context

Terra Nova Park is located in the Thompson Neighbourhood of Richmond, BC. It is situated in the northwest corner of the Lulu Island where the Middle Arm of the Fraser River meets the Strait of Georgia (Attachments 2 and 3). Consisting of the 63-acre Terra Nova Rural Park (TNRP) and the 34-acre Terra Nova Natural Area (TNNA), the location offers immersive natural experiences, walks among farms and gardens, and views stretching across the Gulf of Georgia to Vancouver Island, north to Howe Sound and the city of Vancouver, the Coast Mountains, and the Vancouver International Airport.

Located along the Pacific Flyway and adjacent to the Sturgeon Bank Wildlife Management Area including the Grauer Lands, the park counts large numbers of migratory birds among its fauna and is a significant ecological site. Surrounding the northern and western boundaries of TNRP, the west dike and its recreational trail offers panoramic views to the west of the ocean while providing flood protection as part of the City's dike system.

Due to its physical, historical, cultural and environmental value, Terra Nova has become an important recreational and contemplative experience for Richmond's residents, as well as visitors from other communities. In recognition of this important landscape, the Terra Nova section of the Official Community Plan (OCP) has policies to preserve and enhance the western open space along the perimeter dike, as natural habitat. It also recommends that special views such as of the mountains or waterfront, should be taken advantage of where possible.

### The Terra Nova Rural Park Concept Plan

TNRP is the result of a long history of community engagement starting with its roots in the late 1980s of saving former farm land for park purposes. In 1996, a referendum item was held approving the acquisition and development of the TNRP. In 2004, the City of Richmond (the City) developed a master plan for TNRP, which is roughly defined by the north half of the Terra Nova Park area. After an extensive public process, the Terra Nova Rural Park Concept Plan (the "Plan") was adopted by Council in 2004 as the long term vision for the park:

*"to preserve the unique rural character while providing a balance between agricultural heritage, wildlife conservation, and recreational uses."*

The Plan set a wide range of goals in the aspects of Heritage, Agriculture, Ecology and Recreation. Within its recreation goals, the Plan suggested to create a connection from the slough to the Fraser River, with a boardwalk and interpretative signage/educational boards to identify natural and wildlife species that exist at the location, and a two-level lookout structure along the dike trail that offers extensive views of the Fraser River. Since Council adoption of the Plan, the phased implementation of the park has been realized over the years with various adjustments according to site conditions and opportunities.

At the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services (PRCS) Committee meeting on November 26, 2019, a delegate came forward and presented an idea to construct an eco walkway along Sturgeon Bank and its potential educational attributes and benefits (Attachment 1). An 'eco

walkway’ can be interpreted as an ecology walkway, connecting people and nature by an immersive experience through interaction with their environment and its ecosystem. The presented idea of an eco walkway was different from the Council adopted TNRP Concept Plan in 2004.

### Boardwalk Proposal

The 2004 TNRP Concept Plan includes two (2) boardwalks along Sturgeon Bank: one that is north of the Cannery Store, a heritage interpretation element, located where the cannery was previously located, labeled “Cannery Wharf Boardwalk”; and another boardwalk located at the northwest tip of the Terra Nova Park area, labeled “Boardwalk along dyke edge,” with an optional “Potential Marsh Boardwalk” (Attachment 4).

As discussed at the November 26, 2019, PRCS Committee meeting, an ecology walkway in the form of a boardwalk protruding into the tidal marsh area outside the dike has a number of benefits, such as:

- An excellent educational tool to inform visitors of the flora and fauna found on the Sturgeon Bank by being physically present in the tidal marsh environment;
- Educational boards could be posted along the walkway to identify natural and wildlife species that exist at the location;
- It could become a new learning experience for school groups;
- An associated lookout structure could be constructed with the boardwalk for an elevated view of the surrounding environment; and
- The ecology walkway would become a new tourist attraction for visiting Richmond.

While there are numerous successful examples of boardwalk structures along the waterfront, this location along the Fraser River and Sturgeon Bank is unique and presents a number of specific challenges.

### Ecological Value and Conservation

At the intersection of the Fraser River and Sturgeon Bank, this site has significant current ecological value, including three terrestrial plant communities and eight wetland plant communities. New construction of public access beyond the dike has the potential to present a negative impact on sensitive vegetation, wildlife and remnant natural topography.

Metro Vancouver’s Ecological Health Framework includes a vision of ‘a beautiful, healthy, and resilient environment for current and future generations.’ The Framework provides guiding principles, goals, and strategies to help achieve this vision. A key supporting component of the Framework is the Metro Vancouver commissioned Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory. The Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory has a key goal of “protecting endangered wetlands.” As this location offers a rare opportunity to both directly expand the Green Infrastructure Network and preserve the significant ecosystem services provided by the wetland, minimizing intervention into the habitat area complements the goals and intent of the Ecological Health Framework.

### Permitting Requirements and Environmental Considerations and Challenges

The ecology walkway proposal would require significant time and effort to secure permits and application approvals with multiple senior government agencies and regulatory bodies, including:

- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) on the Federal Fisheries Act;
- Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (FLNRORD) on the provincial Water Sustainability Act;
- First Nations consultation on land and resource decisions that could impact their Indigenous Interests;
- The provincial Inspector of Dikes on the provincial Dike Maintenance Act;
- Environment and Climate Change Canada for the environmental and sustainability review; and
- Transport Canada.

A portion of the area is designated “Red” under DFO’s Habitat Classification. This “Red” designation is considered high-growth habitat/vegetation within federal and provincial environmental regulations. This condition would create a very challenging approval process to attain permission from DFO and FLNRORD. As the City is proposing a recreation use asset on a red zone (albeit it could also be for educational purposes), this would also require habitat compensation elsewhere if it was approved.

### Synergy on Efficient Project Management

The 2022-2024 departmental work plan includes the development of a Terra Nova Heritage Precinct Plan (the “Study”). This Study will investigate the site’s heritage and natural attributes and provides a unique opportunity to include the ecology walkway. Once the Study is complete, staff will present a report to Council seeking endorsement of its findings and recommendations. As such, staff recommend that the procurement for detailed design of any ecology walkway be scheduled after the conclusion of the Study. The coordinated study will maximize the cost effectiveness of both projects.

The following are associated elements with similar objectives of an ecology walkway:

- Public education and passive recreation opportunities: interpretive signage along West Dyke trail to educate the public about wildlife habitat that exists along the Sturgeon Bank; and
- Additional opportunities for passive recreational activities such as walking, hiking, and nature appreciation: while these amenities are already provided along the dike and within the immediately adjacent TNRP and TNNA, staff will continue to expand on additional passive recreational activities in the surrounding environment to enhance this goal.

These improvement ideas would be studied as part of the Terra Nova Heritage Precinct Plan. Subsequent to the conclusion of the Study, staff will bring forward any capital submission for the detailed design of any recommended improvements for Council consideration.

### **Financial Impact**

None at this time.

Should Council direct staff to conduct detailed design of an ecology walkway at the conclusion of the Terra Nova Heritage Precinct Plan, staff will bring forward a capital submission for Council review and approval.

### **Conclusion**

Terra Nova is a unique area in Richmond and an important ecological area. It also has excellent potential for historical interpretation and for recreational opportunities that respect the ecological, heritage and landscape character features and values. While human interventions have contributed to today's conditions, it is essential to prioritize conservation of the ecology of the site and maximize utilization of existing amenities available at the location. The upcoming Terra Nova Heritage Precinct Plan will provide findings and recommendations for the future of the Terra Nova Park including any potential ecology walkway to optimize efficiency in cost and project management.



Jason Chan, BCSLA, CSLA, LEED-AP  
Manager, Parks Planning, Design and Construction  
(604-233-3341)

- Att. 1: Schedule 3 to the Minutes of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee meeting of Richmond City Council held on Tuesday, November 26, 2019
- 2: Site Context Map
  - 3: Terra Nova Rural Park
  - 4: Terra Nova Rural Park Concept Plan

Schedule 3 to the Minutes of the  
Parks, Recreation & Cultural  
Services Committee meeting of  
Richmond City Council held on  
Tuesday, November 26, 2019.

To: Parks Committee

From: Councillor Harold Steves

Date: Nov. 26, 2019

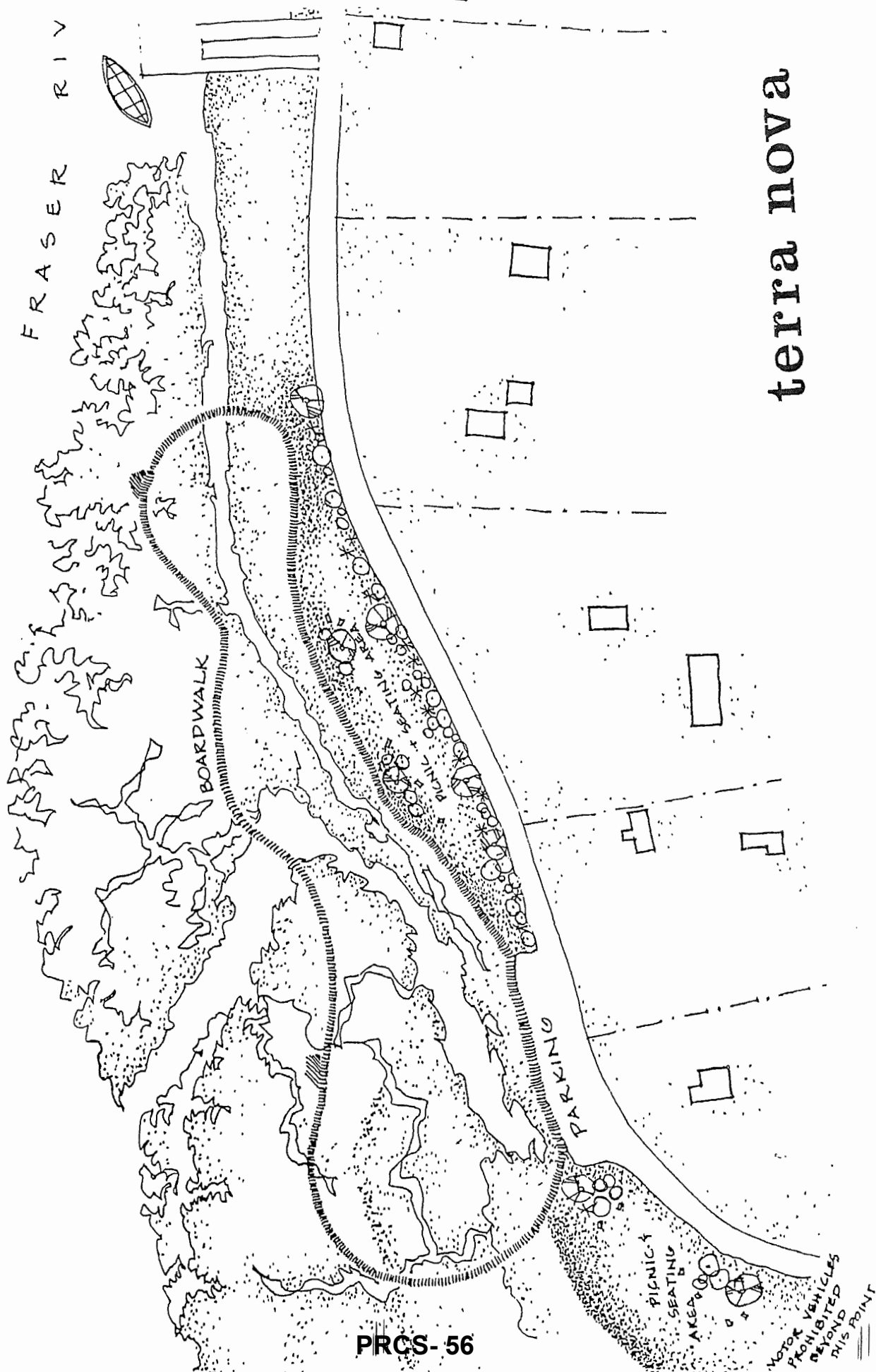
RE: Sturgeon Banks Eco Walkway

Recommendation:

That the City of Richmond consider building an Eco Walkway out over Sturgeon Banks. A walkway was previously recommended straight out from the West Dyke but the land was crown owned. A smaller walkway was approved in the Richmond Trails Plan in 1979. Richmond now owns the foreshore at Terra Nova.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harold Steves", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Harold Steves, City councilor



PRCS-56



## Sturgeon Banks Eco Walkway

John L. Young <johnlyoung@shaw.ca>

Sat 2019-11-23 1:25 PM

Inbox

To: Steves, Harold <hsteves@richmond.ca>;

Dear Harold:

RE: The Sturgeon Banks Eco Walkway

Good talking to you this morning at the Awards Ceremony.

At one point we were discussing the idea of building an Eco Walkway or boardwalk out and back over Sturgeon Banks. This walkway would be an excellent educational tool to inform young and old about the flora and fauna found on the Banks. Along the walkway educational information boards could be posted describing and naming what can be seen and heard. Perhaps students could complete a teacher-made worksheet in order to focus their attention. Perhaps a small tower could be built at the far end of the boardwalk for a better view of the Banks, Vancouver Island and the North Shore mountains. As well, this boardwalk would be a great attraction for visitors to Richmond. Hopefully, financing could come from all three levels of government.

All the best,

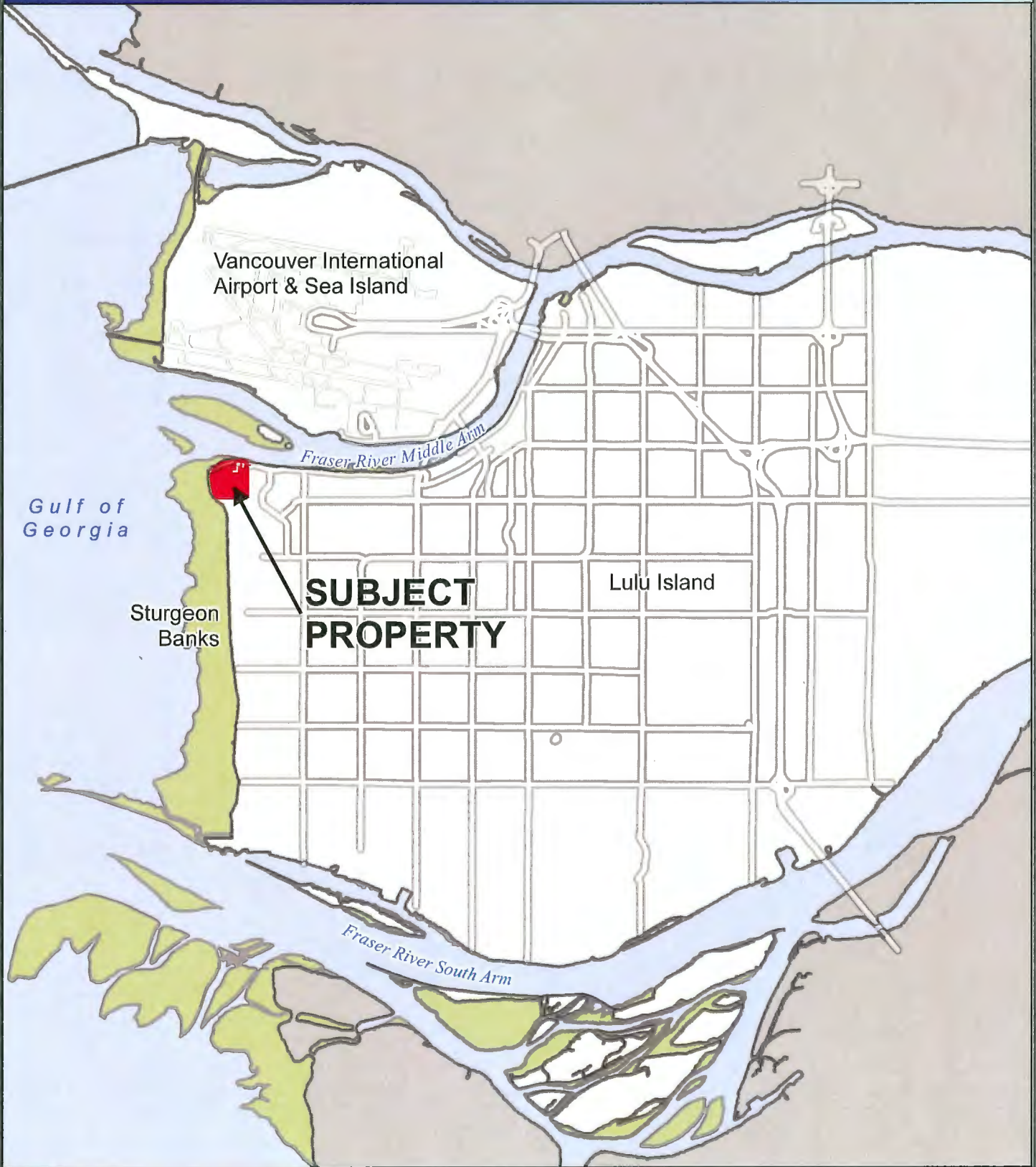
Cheers,


John L. Young

7620 Barkerville Court  
Richmond, BC V7A 1K9  
Home: 604 274 6905



# SITE CONTEXT MAP

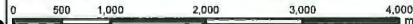


 TERRA NOVA RURAL PARK

Note:  
The information shown on this map is compiled from various sources and the City makes no warranties, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information. Users are reminded that lot sizes and legal description must be confirmed at the Land Title office in New Westminster. This IS NOT a legal document, and is published for information and convenience purposes only. © City of Richmond, 2022. All rights reserved. Not to be reproduced or distributed without permission.

Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N  
Scale: 1:75,000

Date: March 31, 2022  
Name: glooth



PRCS-58





# TERRA NOVA RURAL PARK

**SUBJECT  
PROPERTY**

Fraser River Middle Arm

RIVER

MIDDLE ARM  
DYKE TRAIL

WEST  
DYKE  
TRAIL

TERRA NOVA  
RURAL PARK

TERRA NOVA

STURGEON  
BANKS  
NATURAL  
AREA

WESTMINSTER

WEST  
DYKE  
TRAIL

TERRA NOVA  
NATURAL AREA






GRAUER  
LANDS

MUSGRAVE

PEARCKES


TOLMIE

JOHNSON

- |  |                                  |   |                       |
|--|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
|  | 2271 River Road, Privately-owned |  | TERRA NOVA RURAL PARK |
|  | Environmentally Sensitive Areas  |  | Park Boundary         |
|  | RMA 15m Buffer                   |   |                       |

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Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N  
Scale: 1:4,000  
Date: March 28, 2022  
Name: glooth

 NORTH

0 25 50 100 150 200 M

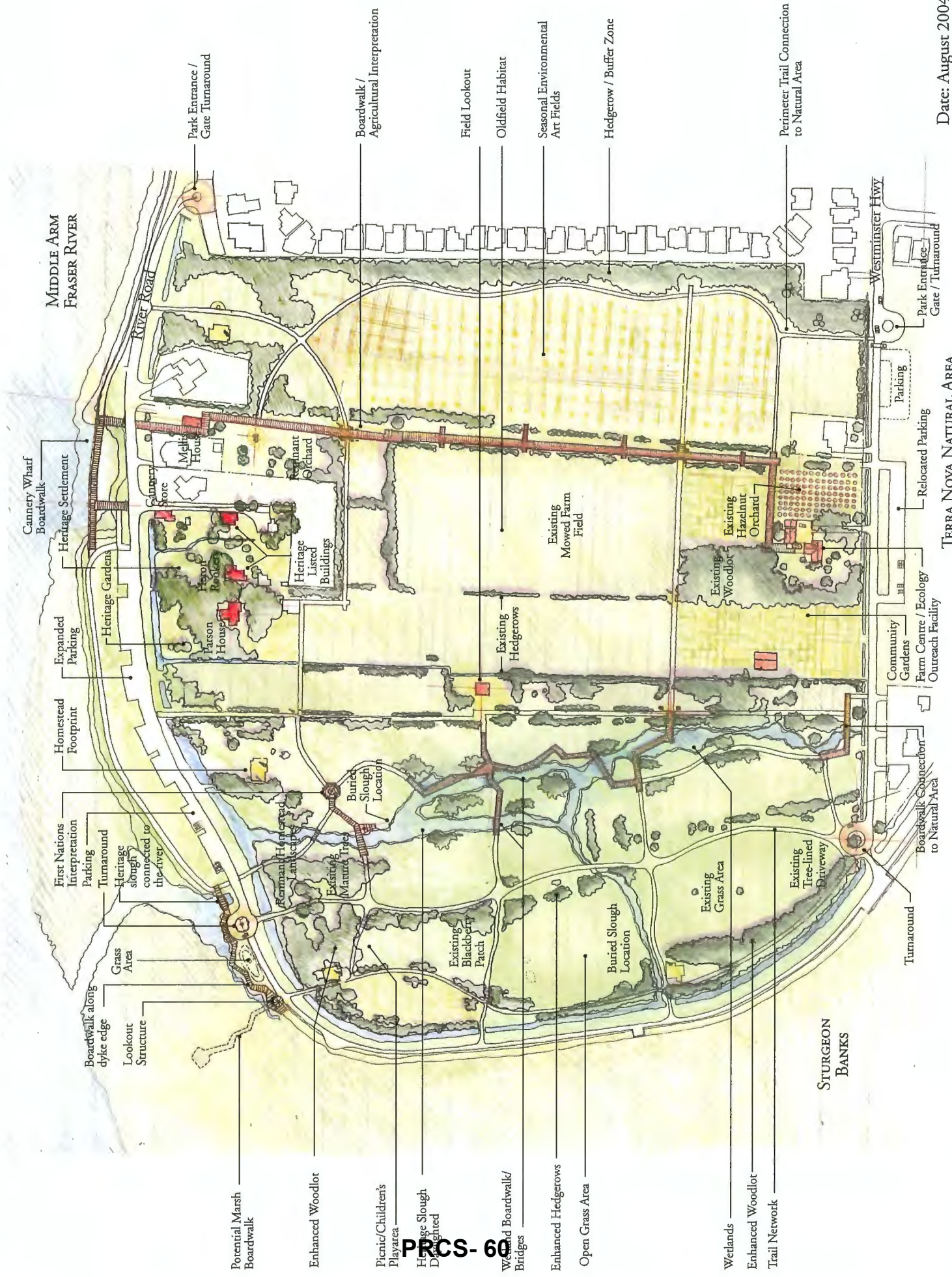


PRCS-59



# TERRA NOVA RURAL PARK CONCEPT PLAN

Attachment 4



PRCS-60

TERRA NOVA NATURAL AREA

Date: August 2004