Belle Isle Park Concept Development Final Report

Appendices are located in a separate document
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Belle Isle Park is an important site to be developed within the Lions Gate Village, which is envisioned as being a thriving vibrant gateway community near the Lions Gate Bridge. This project presents an exceptional opportunity to be a great central public place that will connect the surrounding areas to the future Village Plaza and Village Green, as well as the Capilano River trail system.

This document summarises the process used in developing a final concept design for the park while working with the key stakeholders of the adjacent property developments as well as residents.

Appendices have been included at the end of this document to provide more detail of some of the key elements within the project process, which includes the preliminary and final concept designs as well as detailed cost estimates.
Project Process

During the DISCOVER phase, background research and analysis was carried out to understand the current uses and expectations for the park, potential opportunities and challenges, and the adjacent spatial context including the development plans of the neighbourhood and the immediate area around the park. Design precedents were compiled for park projects with similar elements and characteristics. A design workshop with the developers of adjacent properties was held early in this project to listen and collect the expectations, issues, and concerns of the stakeholders that would influence the development of the park concepts.

The timing of land assemblies and development applications adjacent to the park will require a phased approach to achieve the ultimate park and open space configuration. Situations exist where access must be provided on an interim basis to existing residential properties on the periphery of an expanded Belle Isle Park. The provision of a “phased” or Interim Park Concept will respond to those realities in the short term until such time as the ultimate plan can be fulfilled.

During the DEVELOP phase, two preliminary ultimate concepts and two preliminary interim concepts developed based on the information gathered from the previous research stage and meetings with District staff and stakeholders. Preliminary cost estimates for both concepts were prepared. The developed concepts were presented to the public and stakeholders. There was also an opportunity to view the designs online and an on-line survey.

The preferred ultimate and interim park concepts were finalised based on the public feedback and discussions with the District. A cost estimate for this concept, supporting graphics such as a bird-eye view and perspectives drawings, and dog park material considerations were also prepared for final review by the District.
O2 BACKGROUND RESEARCH

This initial stage of the project process included the collection of background data, policies and guidelines; the review of relevant precedents; and the analysis of the site and the park context including the adjacent development plans. Following a review of the background materials, an analysis of the site was carried out including the exploration of important contextual linkages to the peripheral area, as well as exploring the edge condition possibilities between the park and adjacent development sites.

An integral background document is the Lions Gate Village Public Realm Strategy (District of North Vancouver, 2015), which sets out the character and design principles for the public spaces within the village. The majority of the background research has been sourced from this document and its related studies, and as well as other current guidelines.

Urban Context

The Lions Gate Village is planned as a welcoming pedestrian-oriented centre with Belle Isle Park playing an important role of serving the community with natural and recreational space. The Village Centre will have concentrated amenities, including a community recreation centre, residential and commercial spaces, a community plaza, a daycare facility, a playground, and access to parks and trails.

Park and Open Space Context

There are three neighbourhood parks within the village; Belle Isle park (1) is located within the Village Centre and has strong connections to both the greenway and to the Village Green and Plaza. The park also creates pedestrian connections to the peripheral area and the Capilano River trail system, while serving the recreational and social needs of the community.
River Theme

The Capilano River system within Lions Gate Village Public Realm Strategy has been identified as a key feature of the area and reflects its importance in the residents’ identity of their community. The guideline document applies the river concept to the whole of Lions Gate Village as a theme from which to design the landscape.

‘The key inspirational element is the flowing water of the river. It is the most significant element that shapes the character, functions and all aspects of the river system.

The river concept applies the river system, and water flows, as a metaphor for the circulation routes in the centre.’

Faster and slower zones are designed distinctively using different geometry, paving, and site furniture, expressing the “Flow” and “Eddies” of a river.

The “River Theme” has been used in the concept development of the project, using the guidelines set out within the Lions Gate Village Public Realm Strategy.

Belle Isle Park

Belle Isle Park in its existing state is used for informal and passive activities. The potential to expand the park by using the under-utilized paved surfaces and to fully connect the park with the Village Green and Village Plaza will offer the neighbourhood significantly more natural, public open space.

The following describes the program intent and design character of the expanded Belle Isle Park as identified in the Lions Gate Village Public Realm Strategy.

Program Intent

• A variety of seating types, including picnic tables
• Open (and sunny space) for informal play, picnicking, relaxing
• Open area for active and passive recreation
• Hard surface multi-sport court (i.e. half basketball court)
• Swings and other play features
• Primarily open lawn areas with seating opportunities
• Potential for daycare with outdoor play space to be located adjacent to the park

Design Character

• Large open areas for sunlight exposure, framed by deciduous and evergreen trees for sunlight exposure
• Small undulations in the topography and berms for views over the space
• Informal groupings of trees in moderate sized planted areas to frame and protect the park from surrounding streets “forest pockets” with seating opportunities
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The Design Workshop was held on October 27, 2015, and its purpose was to introduce the Belle Isle Park concept design to the key stakeholders, and to listen and collect the expectations, issues, and concerns of stakeholders that shape the development of the park concepts.

Initial spatial approaches of the park, the site context, and identified opportunities and challenges were presented to kick start discussions on how the park design might unfold.

(Refer to Appendix A for the Design Workshop Summary Report).

The workshop proved to be very effective in getting everyone up to speed on the project as well as to discuss many of the elements of the project in detail to further understand the opportunities and challenges of the project.

**Opportunities**
1. Connect the Village Green and Village Plaza with the park using the following tools:
   - bring water from current Village Green and Plaza design into the park
   - materials, e.g. paving
   - design language
   - overall spatial flow, understanding how spaces can connect
   - play equipment from current Village Green design into the park
   - create a vertical feature within the park that can be seen from the proposed Crossroads Plaza
2. Use the surrounding parks within the village core to support the programming needs of the area (ensure the park isn’t too heavily programmed park given its limited space)
3. Retaining existing trees within the park is a key priority to maintain the existing character of the park
4. Proximity to amenities (Village Green/Plaza, community centre, trails etc.)
5. The heart of the community and a park to connect to other areas and the larger community area
6. Connect the surrounding developments to the village core
7. Maximise the opportunity to provide flexible open space for a variety of individual or group activities
8. Provide an identity for the village

**Challenges**
1. Unknown requirements and layout of the daycare facility
2. Edge condition - Developing a park / residential interface that maintains a public feel while respecting a clear distinction of private spaces
3. Safety / noise / privacy issues for adjacent residents
4. The park has limited frontages - how to maximise the effect of these gateways into the park
5. Making the site feel public with residential edges surrounding the site
6. Drop off / pick-up area and fire access considerations
7. Balancing available space with the amount of intended park programming
8. Existing trees limit the opportunity for changes in topography
9. Connectivity to Village Green / Plaza (across Greenway)
10. Proximity of off-leash dog park to adjacent houses
The two preliminary concept designs were developed based on our initial findings in the Discover phase of the project. Each design was developed with unique features. The public was given the opportunity to evaluate the two concept design options and provide feedback to influence a preferred concept design and park elements.

**Civic + Contemporary (Concept 1: Ultimate Scenario)**
This concept emphasizes the continuity of the geometric form and water theme from the Village Plaza and Village Green. The high-quality play and seating space is an inviting public place where people gather and play. The ground-oriented water channel allows playful use of the flow of water next to the play space. The fenced off-leash dog park offers a safe and enjoyable environment dog owners with their dogs.

**Key Park Elements**

**Water Feature**
Continues “River Theme” from the Village Plaza & Village Green
Water play feature including a water channel and water jets

**Plaza Wood Decking**
Large wood decking area for social and play uses
Integrated seating with contemporary character

**Dog Park**
Fenced off-leash dog park
375 square metres with both gravel and concrete surfacing
Fencing and planting buffer along the dog park boundary

**Play Space**
Small play environment with integrated play

**Road Access**
One-way through road from Fullerton Avenue to Glenaire Drive
Pedestrian / bike path with a flush curb condition for fire truck access
Road and path materials to high quality concrete unit pavers or stone pavers with concrete edging
5 car drop-off / pick-up spaces for daycare facility

**Edge Condition with Adjacent Townhouses** (refer to Cross-Section A-A’: West of Park)
3 metre perimeter path in the park space butting up to the property line (path on District property)
2 metre wide planting & amenity zone within the townhouse property line
2.5 metre private garden space in front of the townhouses

**Other**
Small flexible lawn area
Youth court with seating
All existing trees preserved in this option
This concept emphasizes the continuity of the geometric form and water theme from the Village Plaza and Village Green. The high-quality play and seating space will be an inviting public place where people gather and play. The ground-oriented water channel will allow playful use of the flow of water next to the play space. The fenced off-leash dog park will serve the increasing needs of dog owners by offering a safe and enjoyable environment for both dogs and dog owners.
Natural + Playful  (Concept 2 Ultimate Scenario)

This park concept has natural and organic forms, offering a variety of engaging play opportunities. Varied topography creates visually and physically interesting spaces next to the flexible open field and play area.

Key Park Elements

Larger Play Space (in comparison to Concept 1)
Large integrated play environment
A variety of materials and play features (e.g. sand / rubber surfacing, boulders reflecting the “River Theme,” varied topography potentially used for play)

Larger Open Lawn (in comparison to Concept 1)
Maximized open lawn area for flexible use

Varied Topography
Topographic variations to create visual interest and to define play space
Potential to use the slope for play features

Wood Decking
Small wood decking area for seating

Road Access on North
Fire truck accessible road with 16M diameter turnaround from Fullerton Avenue
Continuous pedestrian/bike path from the turnaround to Glenaire Drive
Road material to be high quality concrete or stone pavers with concrete edging
5 car drop-off / pick-up spaces for daycare facility

Edge Condition with Adjacent Townhouses (refer to Cross-Section A-A’: West of Park)
3 metre perimeter path in the park space butting up to the property line (path on District property)
2 metre wide planting & amenity zone on the townhouse space along the property line
2.5 metre private garden space in front of the townhouses

Other
Two youth court areas, one near the parking spaces, the other on the turnaround
Three existing trees removed in this option (dotted circles without fill colour indicate the trees to be removed.)
Refer to Appendix D. Public Open House Preliminary Park Concept Boards to view the two initial concept master plan boards in full size format (Arch-D, 24 in x 36 in).

This concept focuses on natural and organic forms of the park while offering a variety of diverse and engaging play opportunities. Varied topography will create visually and physically interesting space next to the flexible open field and play area with a potential of incorporating it with play environment.

Belle Isle Park
Natural + Playful
(Concept 2: Ultimate Scenario)

Refer to Appendix D. Public Open House Preliminary Park Concept Boards to view the two initial concept master plan boards in full size format (Arch-D, 24 in x 36 in).
Interim Scenarios (Concept 1 & 2)

These Interim Scenarios show the potential temporary conditions for vehicular access to lots 1806, 1828 and 1846. The paths are proposed to be 4 meter wide, and shared-use for pedestrians and cars. Bollards are placed at the end of the path to clearly define pedestrian-only areas from the shared-use areas.

Civic + Contemporary (Concept 1)

This interim scenario provides a 4 metre wide vehicle/pedestrian shared-use path for the residences. One meter width of the shrub planting along the path, and the northeast corner of the planting bed would be affected by the access.

Natural + Playful (Concept 2)

This interim scenario provides a 4 meter wide vehicle/pedestrian shared-use path for the residences. Two day care drop-off/pick-up parking spaces with a bulb-out are provided compared to the five parking spaces in the ultimate scenario. A small shrub planting area with a new tree is added at the northeast corner next to the interim path. The new tree is to be relocated once the interim situation is no longer required. One meter width of the shrub planting area along the path would also be affected, and bollards would be placed to prevent any collision during the interim situation.
Residential Edge Conditions

Cross-Section A-A’: West of Park (Concept 1 & 2)

Precedents Images of Proposed Edge Condition Residential & Park (Cross-Section A-A’)

PROPERTY LINE LOCATION

PROPERTY LINE LOCATION
Fenced Dog Off-leash Park
Cross-Section B-B’ : Dog Park (Concept 1)

A small dog off-leash park (375 sq.m) is designed for Concept 1. The entire area is surrounded by high quality fencing along with 2 metres of shrub planting to work as a buffer and strengthen the relationship of the dog park within the overall park setting. This design is to be further developed in the preferred concept.

Precedent Image of Proposed Dog Park

Precedent Image of Proposed Fence and Planting Buffer Adjacent to Dog Park

Laneway Condition on North
Precedent Image of Laneway Condition
Types of Play

Providing a Range of Play Opportunities

All children need outdoor play environments that are imaginative, inspiring and designed to cultivate their development through play. Five distinct types of play were identified as crucial for a diverse and meaningful play environment: Creative, fantasy, nature, social, and active. The play area design aims to offer these unique play opportunities to children of all ages.
Objective
The purpose of the public consultation for the Belle Isle Park concept development was to give the public the opportunity to evaluate the concept options and to provide feedback that would influence the selection of a preferred concept and park elements. The interpretation of the public feedback was used as guidance for the refinement and finalization of the park concept.

Refer to Appendix D for the Public Open House Preliminary Concept Designs Boards.

Framework

Open House BOARDs
• Existing Site Context (4 boards): The existing site context boards included information of the parks and open space, street network, cycling network, site furnishings, lighting strategy, planting strategy, and materials based on the Lions Gate Public Realm Strategy.
• Park Concept (6 boards): Two park concept options, Civic + Contemporary (Option 1) and Natural + Playful (Option 2) were displayed. Each option included a park concept masterplan with precedent images, a birds-eye view drawing, and an interim scenario.
• Edge Condition Strategies (1 board): Edge condition strategies were presented with cross-sections and precedent images.
• Types of Play (1 board): A range of play opportunities were presented to show a general approach for a successful play environment, which includes Creative, Fantasy, Nature, Social, and Active.

Comment forms were available for attendees to provide their feedback on the park concepts and elements.

On Line Survey

The comment forms was available on the District’s website as an on line survey. The open house boards were displayed on the website for the public to review before answering the questions. The same questions from the open house were asked in the on line survey.
Summary of Findings

Despite a reasonable attendance of 35 participants at the open house and a 2 week period for the online survey, only a small number of surveys were collected (14 in total). As a result of the small sample size, it should be anticipated that there be a substantial variance within the results.

Based on the surveys collected, the following were identifies directions:

- Maintain the overall design of Concept Option 2: Natural and Playful.
- Maximize and emphasize the play environment that is integrated, natural, inclusive and high quality.
- Integrate the play environment with the water feature (the only park element that received stronger support from Concept Option 1: Civic and Contemporary).
- Keep the larger lawn area, with topographical interest.

Preference was split between the two concepts for the following elements:

- Dog park
- Retention of the existing trees
- Wood deck feature

Of these elements the dog park arose as the element most in question. Based on the responses received, the major concerns were regarding the maintenance and size of the space. If a dog park is implemented, it should be well designed to get the most value out of the space. There should also be an understanding that the maintenance requirements of this area would likely be higher than traditional park spaces.

Please refer to the Appendix B. Public Consultation Summary Report for the full version of the summary report.
06 PREFERRED CONCEPT DESIGN

Key Strategies

Based on the findings from the public consultation process and meetings with the District, elements from the two preliminary concepts were selected for the development of the finalised ultimate concept:

- Retain the general layout and most of the elements from the Concept 2: Natural + Playful
- Include dog park with further developed design (e.g. materials)
- Water feature to be implemented with play feature that is different from the ones in the Village Green
- The revised transportation plan by Urban Systems is to be included for the road on the north
- Fire truck staging area is to be incorporated in the park adjacent to the greenway
- Residential edge condition design with a 2 metre Amenity and Planting Zone is to be maintained
- Preservation / removal of existing trees to be determined based on the arborist’s recommendations
Preferred Ultimate Concept Design

- Scale = 1:750
- Slope (topographical interest)
- Concrete paving
- Seating / retaining walls
- Crushed granite paving
- Boulders
- Double gates
- Existing trees (4)
- Daycare drop-off / pick-up parking space
- Concrete pathways
- Sport court
- Seating wall + planting
- Flexible open lawn
- Swing
- Rubber surfacing
- Concrete seating on mound
- Seating wall + planting
- Balancing equipment spinners
- Concrete seating
- Seating
- Balancing equipment
- Seating
- Seating
- Hill slide
- Climbing poles
- Boulders
- Concrete pathways
- Unit pavers
- Foot path lighting
- Concrete seating
- Turf
- Seating
- Water jets
- Water pumps + concrete platforms
- Fire truck staging area (9.5m wide)
- Scored concrete paving (consistent through Larco-Greenway-Park frontages)
- Dundas Residential edge planting + amenity zone (pavers + seating)
- Proposed trees
Key Park Elements

Water Feature

Water features are included in the finalised concept based on the strong support from the public, but also serve to provide a visual connection between the park and the Village Green. The integrated water play features located at the south of the park near the Greenway include hand pumps, concrete platforms and a water channel that will stimulate imagination and encourage social play activity.

Play Environment

The public indicated strong support for a large high-quality play area. The play environment is designed with the goal of creating a well-rounded play environment that offers a rich variety of experiences, but also provides upper and lower body activity for a range of users. The play features includes a hill slide, climbing poles, a swing, climbing equipment, balancing equipment, and rotating platforms; These will provide children and adults of all ages with unique opportunities to play, explore, imagine, learn, socialize and experience movement and challenge.

Play area elements, colours and materials should be coordinated with the Village Green and Plaza designs prior to construction to ensure a strong link in design character from the Village Plaza and Green into the park.
Water Feature & Play Environment

- Swing
- Climbing structure
- Rubber surfacing
- Concrete seating on the mound
- Balancing equipment
- Dutch disk
- Spinners
- Water pumps + concrete platforms
- Water jets
- Water drain
- Seating
- Hill slide
- Seating
- Climbing poles
- Seating
Perspective sketch view from the greenway
Residential Edge Condition - Amenity & Planting Zone

Plan and Section A-A’: West of park
Scale 1:100

The residential edge between the adjacent townhouse development and the park has been designed to ensure that there is a buffer space between private and public space. This buffer is semi-public/semi-private space, planned to be an amenity and planting zone. These areas are located within the townhouse property, 2 meter offset from the property line, and are to be designed with unit pavers, seating walls and planting. The angled geometry of edge condition is influenced by the river theme from the Lions Gate Village Public Realm Strategy.
Fenced Off-leash Dog Area

A small fenced off-leash dog area is included in the finalized concept at the northeast of the park, measuring approx. 555 square metres with two double gated entries. The area includes unique dog park amenities such as a concrete dome, boulders, and seating walls. Planting areas and seating/retaining walls accommodate changes in topography to add more spatial interest throughout the space. A waste receptacle, a waste bag dispenser, and signage should be located at both entry points. A water station for play, washing and drinking is included as recommended by District staff. Two of the retained existing trees will provide shade for the users within the park. The entire area is surrounded by high quality fencing along with 2 metres of shrub planting to work as a buffer and strengthen the relationship of the dog park within the overall park setting. The surface materials are crushed granite and concrete. Refer to Dog Park Material Consideration section for further information.
Dog Park Plan Enlargement

Dog Park Cross-Section A-A'

Dog Park Cross-Section B-B'
Perspective sketch view of dog park from the road on the north side of the site
Dog Park Material Consideration

Surface Materials
- The selection of surface materials should be guided by intensity of use, site drainage, maintenance demands, capital costs, and topography.
- Grass is not recommended for this site because of the small space available and high level of use anticipated.
- Decomposed granite (also known as crusher dust, crushed stone surfacing, or fine gravel) is a good surfacing option relative to durability, cost, ease of up-keep, effective drainage, and dog owner satisfaction; and is well-suited for pathways and areas of high use. Crushed granite is considered a low maintenance material, and it should be installed with a drainage layer below the surface layer. Hosing down the surface could be an effective way to clean the surface as the material itself allows for infiltration.
- Concrete or asphalt are recommended for paths that are to be regularly cleared and highly used in winter, and for areas around dog wash stations or drinking fountains.
- Sand and pea gravel can be useful surfaces in poor-draining areas, but both typically require some containment to prevent these material from scattering into adjacent surfaces.
- Artificial turf may be a suitable material for adding interest to high use sites.
- Wood chips are not recommended due to their high maintenance demands. Wood chips may need to be replaced every 5 - 7 years to remove the accumulated layer of decomposed chips, and this process of removal could be harmful to the root system of adjacent trees. Wood chips can also create a crust on the soil surface that can impede drainage to the soil below.

Amenities
- Amenities for off leash areas should balance demand, use patterns, distribution across sites, and available capital and maintenance resources.
- Standard amenities may include waste bins, waste bag dispensers, signage, open space and trees.
- Potential special amenities include: seating, drinking water, dog cleaning station, washrooms, notice boards, mix of conditions (forest, field, etc.), separated areas for small dogs and large dogs, shelter structure, or lighting.

Signage
- Signage messaging should be concise, easy to read, and presented in a hierarchical manner to emphasize priority items. Positive messaging is valued by dog owners, and can help foster compliance with the rules.
- Entry signs at off leash areas should be prominently posted, and should include bylaws and code of conduct, a map of off leash area boundaries, contact information for emergencies and bylaw enforcement.
- Kiosks or notice boards should be incorporated at the main park entry or entries for District and public use.
- Educational signage could be incorporated to encourage responsible dog ownership.
A majority of stakeholders showed a strong level of support for a flexible green space for a variety of activities. Therefore 1400 square metres of open lawn has been allocated to the park.

A youth court (basketball area) is located at the north side of the park set away from the road. The area will have one basketball hoop with court markings on asphalt paving, and will be framed by planting and seat walls.

A road is planned on the north side of the park. Five parking spaces for daycare drop-off/pick-up are included in the design along the road with 90 degree parking geometry. The design of the road and parking spaces will be further refined during the detailed design phase.

Topographical variations received good support from the public. Mounds are located in various areas including the open lawn, play areas, and the dog park. They will be well integrated in consideration of the intended use of the areas. For example, the rubber surfacing mound in the play area will provide challenging and unique play experiences with a hill slide and climbing poles as well as integrated seating stools.
Preferred Interim Concept Design

The preferred interim concept design shows how vehicular access to lots 1806, 1828 and 1846 would be accommodated during the interim period.

This interim scenario provides a 4 meter wide vehicle/pedestrian shared-use gravel path for the residences protected by fixed and removable bollards. The slope in the planting area on the northeast corner of the dog park will be implemented for the ultimate scenario to be achieved. A portion of the dog park fence will also need to be adjusted along with additional tree planting as per the Preferred Ultimate Concept Design.
A number of items surrounding the park are subject to change as development plans change. All of these items will require further coordination and consideration to ensure the design of the park reflects the adjacent property designs and vice versa.

**01 Residential Edge Condition**
The residential edge condition, previously described within the Preferred Concept Design section within this document has been approved by the District. Early coordination between key stakeholders developing the residential properties and the park will be essential to achieve the design intent set out within this document.

Note: The District should ensure that the number of entrances into the adjacent properties is not increased in order to achieve the Amenity and Planting Zone as designed.
02 Road and daycare drop-off/pick-up parking spaces

The layout of the road should be further coordinated and confirmed during the detailed design phase, especially the geometry of daycare drop-off/ pick-up parking spaces (including the location, 90 degree angled parking, and specific dimensions).

03 Village Green / Village Plaza

The team for the detailed design of Belle Isle Park should further coordinate with the design team of the village centre development to ensure a strong connection and integration with the Village Green and Plaza, including the choice of materials, configuration of spaces as well as integration of the Greenway.

04 Greenway

The Greenway should be well coordinated among the related design teams of the adjacent spaces. Where possible the detailed design should aim to achieve a unified feel and character of the areas.

Some consideration should be given to look at whether one design consultant would be best placed to carry out the detailed design of all three linked spaces; or whether the project can be constructed by one contractor to ensure that all of the three linked spaces are constructed together.

05 Fire truck staging area

The fire truck staging area is located along the Greenway. The total width of the area is 9.5 metres, with a 2 metre offset into the Larco development site, 4 metres on the greenway, and 3.5 meter offset into the park. The only park amenities located within the fire truck staging area are the water channel and drain, both of which could accommodate vehicular access. The dimensions and materials should be further discussed and confirmed.

06 Daycare integration

Lot 1846 is the proposed site of a future daycare facility, directly adjacent to the park. The design of the building and the daycare play spaces will be important for the successful integration of the facility into the park. The design of the daycare facility including access, building height/area/setback, edge condition, and materials should be coordinated during the detailed design. 5 drop off / pick up car parking spaces for the daycare site are located on the road on the north side of the park (refer to item 02).

07 Grading coordination with adjacent developments

The grading design of the park should be refined in coordination with the adjacent development sites.