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INTRODUCTION



CREATING GARDEN CITY LANDS

Richmond residents have a unique opportunity to create a new legacy for their community on the Garden City Lands (the Lands), an extraordinary 55.2 hectares (136.5 acres) of open space in the heart of Richmond, between Westminster Highway, Alderbridge Way, Garden City Road and No. 4 Road.

The City of Richmond recently acquired the Lands in 2010 from the Federal government who had owned it since 1903. The 'big sky' experience of the vast bog and meadow landscape, the location and the ability for the community to access nature of this size within an urban setting, and the Agricultural Land Reserve designation makes Garden City Lands truly unique in Richmond and the region.

Richmond has dramatically changed over the years and has more recently become an emerging and dynamic urban city. With a corporate vision to be "the most appealing, livable and well-managed community in Canada" and a commitment to sustainability, Garden City Lands provides an unprecedented opportunity to provide much needed open space for the burgeoning population.

The Garden City Legacy Landscape Plan has been created to guide the future development of the Lands.

Legacies are created with bold moves. Acquiring Garden City Lands for community use is one of those moves ensuring that Richmond is a sustainable and livable city. As the land is slowly and carefully opened up for public use the legacy will only continue to grow and be enjoyed for generations to come.



SITE DESCRIPTION

The Garden City Lands are located within and at the eastern edge of Richmond's City Centre at 5555 No. 4 Road. In addition, to the one large parcel of land, a sliver of the visible grass and wetland areas along the western edge lies within a separate address, 5040 Garden City Road, a road right-of-way created for the construction of Alderbridge Way in the 1980's (Appendix A).

In the current 2041 Official Community Plan (OCP) Land Use Map, the Garden City Lands at 5555 No. 4 Road and portions of 5040 Garden City Road, are designated as 'Conservation'. This is defined as being natural and semi-natural areas with important environmental values that may also be used for recreation, park, agricultural and food production purposes. Both properties are zoned AG1-Agriculture.

This property and the Lands are located within the provincially designated Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The Metro Vancouver 2040 Regional Growth Strategy has designated the 136.5 acre Garden City Lands 'Conservation and Recreation'.

The term Garden City Lands or the Lands refer to the one parcel at 5555 No. 4 Road. The Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan, however, includes those portions of 5040 Garden City Road that are integrated into the overall design. This adds a little over 2 acres to the 136.5 acre site.



CITY POLICIES AND RELEVANT STRATEGIES

In November 2012, the City of Richmond adopted the 2041 Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw 9000. The focus in the 2041 OCP Plan is for Richmond to be a sustainable and healthy city which is reflected in the following Plan Vision statement:

“In 2041, Richmond has become a more sustainable City—a place of great spaces and experiences, whose greatest assets include its thriving downtown, diversified economy, healthy, distinct and connected neighbourhoods, its island shoreline, open spaces, and protected and productive agricultural lands. Richmond has adaptable and prosperous businesses that enrich people, the community, the natural environment, the world and future generations.”

In addition, the OCP outlines a series of goals, objectives, policies, guidelines and land use designations that reflect overall community values and support the vision.

The 2041 OCP and many other City strategies and initiatives including the recently adopted 2022 Parks and Open Space Strategy (POSS) have influenced and are reflected in the development of the Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan.

In the Section 2-Background of this document, key relevant goals, objectives and policies from the 2041 Official Community Plan and the 2022 Parks and Open Space Strategy have been identified.

“The community planning decisions which municipalities make have as much or more of an impact on the health of people than the decisions which doctors and hospitals make”. These decisions include providing opportunities for affordable housing, child care, recreation, parks, trails, densification, walkability, access to nature and healthy lifestyles.”

Dr. Patrick O'Connor,
Vice President, Medicine,
Quality, and Safety,
Vancouver Coastal Health,
June 2012.



THE PLANNING PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Very few cities in the world have the opportunity to plan and implement such a large civic space within a city centre context. After acquisition of the Garden City Lands, the City of Richmond Council established a Council 2011-2014 Term Goal 7.4 “Complete the Garden City Lands planning process by 2014.”

A two phased planning process with the key milestones was approved by City Council in October, 2012.

Phase One of the planning project involved ‘getting to know the land’, a technical review of the Lands. Consultants were hired to undertake a heritage study and conduct a preliminary biophysical inventory and analysis on the site that included an agricultural assessment. A vision statement and guiding principles were then developed and adopted by City Council in July 2013.

Phase Two was the development of concept design options based on public input, the background information and the vision and guiding principles. A landscape architectural firm was hired to assist in developing the concepts and final Legacy Landscape Plan.

A comprehensive and inclusive community participation process was undertaken during both phases. Further information on the public consultation is in Section 3-Community Involvement and on the City website.

Throughout the process a multi-department city staff team provided input and support for the project. In addition, advice and input was provided by outside experts in local agriculture and bog environments.

KEY PLANNING STAGES

