City of Richmond

Report to Council

To:	Richmond City Council	**Date:**	August 31st, 2005
From:	Councillor Harold Steves Chair, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee	**File:**	06-2345-20-MIN01
Re:	**Minoru Park Plan**		

The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee, at its meeting held on Tuesday, July 26th, 2005, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

(1) ***That the Minoru Park Vision and Guiding Principles (as outlined in the report dated July 12th, 2005, from the Director of Parks Operations and the Director, Recreation & Cultural Services), be adopted;***

(2) ***That staff take the Vision and Guiding Principles to the public for further input; and***

(3) ***That staff explore the feasibility of negotiating with the developers of new high rise buildings constructed around Minoru Park the provision of one floor of space for City use.***

Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended parts 1 and 2 of the above.

City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To Parks, Rec & Culture - July 26, 2005

To:	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee	**Date:**	July 12, 2005
From:	Dave Semple Director of Parks Operations Kate Sparrow Director, Recreation & Cultural Services	**File:**	06-2345-20-MINO1
Re:	**Minoru Park Plan**		

Staff Recommendation

1. That the Minoru Park Vision and Guiding Principles be adopted; and

2. That staff be directed to take the Vision and Guiding Principle to the public for further input.

Dave Semple
Acting Director, Public Works
(3350)

Kate Sparrow
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
(4129)

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:	**CONCURRENCE**		**CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER**		
Fire Rescue	Y ☑ N ☐				
Engineering	Y ☑ N ☐				
Recreation & Cultural Services	Y ☐ N ☐				
Policy Planning	Y ☑ N ☐				
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES ☑	NO ☐	**REVIEWED BY CAO**	YES ☑	NO ☐

1614093

Staff Report

Origin

In February 2003, Richmond City Council received a report from staff outlining issues relating to the current Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) delivery system and a proposal for changes that included a Community Involvement Model, Planning Framework and Proposed Service Delivery System renewal. It was determined that a Master Plan for Minoru Park should be developed as part of the PRCS Master Plan.

In the last few years City Council has received several requests for new facilities on Minoru Park including expansions and improvements of existing facilities. With so many demands already on the park, combined with a rapidly changing City Centre, it was time to review the condition of the existing park and to establish its future role in Richmond's larger open space system.

The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of a set of Guiding Principles, a proposed Minoru Park Development Framework, and to outline the recommended next steps for preparing a detailed master plan that includes public input process.

Analysis

The Need to Revisit the Minoru Park Plan:
The Existing Site and Context

Richmond is a changing community and the City Centre more than any area within the City. In addition to the requests for new and expanded facilities within the park, there are other driving factors that support the need to revisit the existing Minoru Park plan and develop a new vision. Some of the key factors include:

1. PRCS Master Plan Directions

To guide the PRCS master plan, and ensure a sustainable approach to meet the quality of life needs for current and future generations, the PRCS Master Plan document has been based on six guiding principles which were adopted by Council in February 2003:

- Ensure the City's ability to meet community needs
- Ensure that customer service is enhanced
- Ensure financial sustainability
- Set a policy framework for decision making,
- Value and encourage community involvement
- Value effective partnerships

The PRCS Master Plan guidelines provide the direction for developing the Minoru Park Framework as well as the next steps to preparing a more detailed plan.

2. The City Centre 'Green Necklace'

In the Official Community Plan the City has adopted the concept of a 'green necklace' of parks around the perimeter of the Downtown District. Each park acts as a 'jewel' on the necklace connected by greenways and green streets. In order to establish a comprehensive open space network in the City Centre, each park would be developed to be unique and complementary within this system.

In the last few years, since the concept was adopted, there have been opportunities to significantly advance its implementation. Three new parks are being added to the 'necklace' with the current development of the 21 acre Garden City Community Park; the successful negotiation for a portion of the Department of Fisheries (DFO) Garden City Road property; and the future 2010 Olympic Speed Skating Oval and waterfront park along the Middle Arm.

Each one of these parks will be unique and serve a different function and role within the City. Garden City Community Park will provide a more natural environment with its large stands of birch trees and new lake; the Garden City Lands (former DFO property) park portion has the opportunity to become a major regional and community sports oriented park; and the Oval site will become an exciting vibrant waterfront park with a focus on high performance sports and wellness.

Minoru Park no longer has to be 'all things for all people' as the only major green space in the City Centre for the last 50 years. There is an opportunity now to review the existing park program and create the future vision that will be complementary with the other parks on the 'green necklace.'

3. Higher Density Residential Developments/ Population Growth

It is anticipated that as many as 60,000 people could live in the City Centre. The landscape is changing with the introduction of higher density living in both townhouses and residential towers. A diversity of high quality green infrastructure such as park land, urban plazas, greenways, and walkable green streets will be critical in creating places for people to gather, socialize, play, exercise and relax.

Currently a rezoning application with four proposed residential towers is underway along the eastern edge of Minoru Park. This is an opportunity for the City to work with the developer to integrate the park with the residential development and create a strong green link to Minoru Boulevard.

Another six residential towers will be developed across the street on Elmbridge Way and Alderbridge Way. It is anticipated that over time the other properties bordering the park will also be rezoned to a higher density use including Richmond Centre Mall which potentially could be redeveloped with a mix of residential and commercial and transit oriented development (TOD) uses.

Minoru Park will become even more valuable and critical to protect as a high quality green space to support this substantial increase in the number of residents bordering on the park. For these new residents Minoru Park will become their local neighbourhood park.

4. Multiple Facilities and an Aging Infrastructure

Minoru Park contains a variety of significant cultural and recreational facilities squeezed into one park space. As the only large park in the City Centre for many years and a designated City-wide park it has received all the major facilities that a growing community has needed over the years. Many of these facilities are now aging and will need to be replaced or expanded to keep up with growth. As outlined in the PRCS Master Plan there is a need to review the future of almost all the major facilities and amenities including the Cultural Centre, Arenas, Aquatic Centre, Senior Centre, Tennis Club, and Family Place as well as the sports uses such as the track and field and the baseball diamond.

As the green heart of the City the landscape, including the lakes, is the defining feature of Minoru Park. There are many beautiful mature trees and plants in the park, however, some of the landscape has matured beyond its prime and is in decline or is no longer appropriate for the space creating safety concerns. A Landscape Management Plan will help to ensure that the features the community values are maintained well into the future.

With the acquisition of new park land in the Garden City Lands Precinct there is an opportunity now to determine the appropriateness of placing new facilities or uses in Minoru Park and whether aging facilities should be replaced or relocated to another park.

5. Community Safety Building

Council has previously approved the corner of Granville and Gilbert in Minoru Park for the proposed Community Safety Building that will house the Richmond Fire Department Administration, Firehall #1 and the Richmond Detachment of the RCMP. This proposed facility has approximately 4 acre footprint, will be post disaster and will replace Firehall #1 and the current RCMP detachment headquarters. Staff are reviewing this location to minimize the impact on Minoru Park and will be bringing forward a report on the options at a later date.

To acknowledge this direction, staff have indicated the proposed Community Safety Building at the southwest corner of the park. However, the vision for the parksite is to open up this corner as the major park gateway.

A Park Vision and Guiding Principles

In December 2004 a two-day design charette with City staff and consultants was held to review the existing site conditions and context (Attachment 1), and to generate ideas on a future long term vision for Minoru Park. As part of this process a vision statement has been developed that takes into consideration Minoru's history as a social gathering place for the

community, the formal and mature landscape, and the many memories that people have for this park as well as the future needs of the City. The Vision is:

"Minoru Park is a vibrant social and cultural gathering place - a signature civic green space that is the heart and soul of City."

To support this vision and guide future development in the park, the following series Guiding Principles and Development and Design Directives have been created and are detailed in Attachment 2.

Summary of Guiding Principles:

1. Respect and build upon the history of the park and site;
2. Expand the 'green' role and value of the park in the City Centre;
3. Establish a unique identity and civic role for Minoru Park that is complementary to other parks in the City Centre;
4. Create strong visual and physical links to the surrounding neighbourhoods and streets;
5. Minimize building footprints in the park;
6. Recognize the role of the park as a local residential neighbourhood park.

A simple illustrative plan, the Minoru Park Development Framework, has been created to reflect the Vision and the Guiding Principles (Attachment 3).

Next Steps

There are many factors influencing the future development of Minoru Park that need to be considered before creating a detailed Park Master Plan. One of the main factors will be the availability of parkland in the Garden City Lands Precinct. At present it is understood that the City may have an opportunity to develop a significant portion of the Garden City lands.

Once the final acreage and program for the site is confirmed, a comprehensive strategy outlining the location, phasing, and type of recreational and cultural services throughout the City Centre will be developed as identified in the PRCS Master Plan.

A number of short term actions are proposed:

1. Prepare a Tree and Landscape inventory and management plan;
2. Create a park 'edge plan' along the east side of the park to ensure that the proposed high density residential development Minoru Boulevard is properly integrated with the park;
3. Implement minor capital repairs to the Minoru Park fieldhouse washroom facility to ensure that the facility remains operational.
4. Develop a public input process to present the guiding principles and development framework to the community and park stakeholders.

The proposed Minoru Park development framework and set of guiding principles establishes a starting point to determine the future of Minoru Park as part of the larger system of parks within the City.

Realization of the design guidelines depends upon new facility development elsewhere in the parks system, specifically, Garden City Lands Precinct Park which has been identified as a major community and Regional Park for athletics and outdoor sports use in the future. It is recommended that the preparation of a detailed Minoru Park Master plan occur concurrently or following the Garden City Lands Precinct Master Plan.

Financial Impact

The short term recommendations as outlined in this report have the following financial implications:

- Minoru Park Fieldhouse Minor Capital Improvements: $100,000 as approved in the 2005 Parks Minor Capital program;

- Tree and Landscape inventory and management plan: $25,000 to be recommended in the 2006 Parks Capital Advanced Design program

- Create a park 'edge plan' along the east side of the park to ensure that the proposed high density residential development Minoru Boulevard is properly integrated with the park: $10,000 from Parks Capital 2005 Advanced Design.

The development of a public input process to present the guiding principles and development framework to the community and park stakeholders is not proposed to occur until 2006. This process will be recommended as part of the 2006 Parks Capital Program.

Conclusion

Minoru Park is the green heart of the City and has been developed over many years as the only major site for many of the recreational and cultural facilities needed to meet the needs of a growing community. There is now an opportunity, with the recent acquisition and development potential of a number of large park sites within the City Centre, to revisit the role of Minoru Park.

The Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan has identified the need to provide a comprehensive approach to providing new facilities and replacing existing infrastructure within this larger park system.

A vision, set of guiding principles, and development framework have been proposed in this report as the starting point for a more detailed Park Plan to be created concurrently or following the Garden City Lands Master Plan.

Yvonne Stich
Park Planner
Design
(3310)

Mike Redpath
Manager, Parks – Programs, Planning and

(1275)

YS:ys

Attachment 1

Hotel
- ☐ existing public right-of-way on private land
- ☑ strengthen connection to Alderbridge Way

Richmond Hospital
- ☐ potential redevelopment of parking lot
- ☑ provide connection to Westminster Hwy

Minoru Lakes
- ☐ traditional landscape with seasonal interest
- ☐ hidden asset/gem
- ☑ improve vistas to lakes
- ☑ improve links to hospital and Westminster Hwy

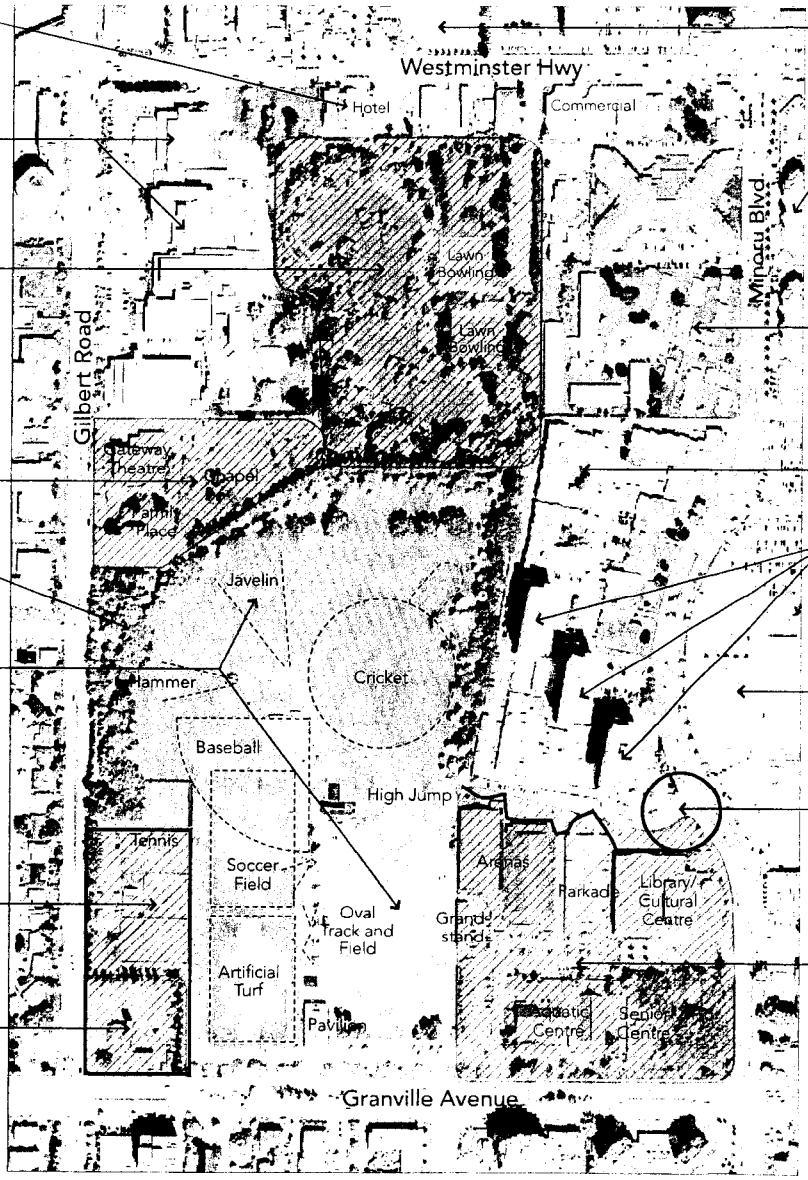
Gateway Theatre/Chapel
- ☑ strengthen connections to park and other cultural activities

Significant Trees
- ☑ mature trees & shrubs need landscape management plan

Track and Field /Civic Special Events /Organized Sports
- ☐ historic use of the park
- ☐ multiple amenities closely spaced
- ☐ intensive use
- ☐ safety concerns
- ☐ awkward pedestrian circulation
- ☑ Garden City Lands - opportunity to relocate and create a high quality outdoor sports and athletics centre

Tennis Club / Public Courts
- ☑ potential to relocate club
- ☑ Fire Hall could relocate here

Fire Hall
- ☐ new facility required
- ☐ potential Community Safety Building Headquarters
- ☑ opportunity to relocate
- ☑ create a gateway into park



Rezoning Applications
- ☐ 6 residential towers

Richmond Centre
- ☐ Mixed use residential / commercial

Kiwanis Senior Housing
- ☐ potential for higher density residential development

Rezoning Application
- ☐ 4 residential towers

Residential
- ☐ potential for higher density tower redevelopment
- ☐ no links into park
- ☑ redevelop future edges to face and integrate with the park

Richmond Centre Mall
- ☐ potential redevelopment to Mixed Use residential towers/commercial

Minoru Boulevard park entrance
- ☐ important pedestrian / vehicular entrance
- ☐ 'backdoor' of facilities facing this entrance
- ☑ emphasize and strengthen pedestrian corridor and gateway into park
- ☑ re-orient / articulate future building facades along north edge

Civic Cultural/Recreation Use Precinct
- ☐ multiple facilities at different life-cycle stages
- ☐ lack of physical and visual coherence
- ☑ emphasize unique Arts and Culture identity and function in the park
- ☑ expand cultural functions into the park
- ☑ protect and enhance heritage trees

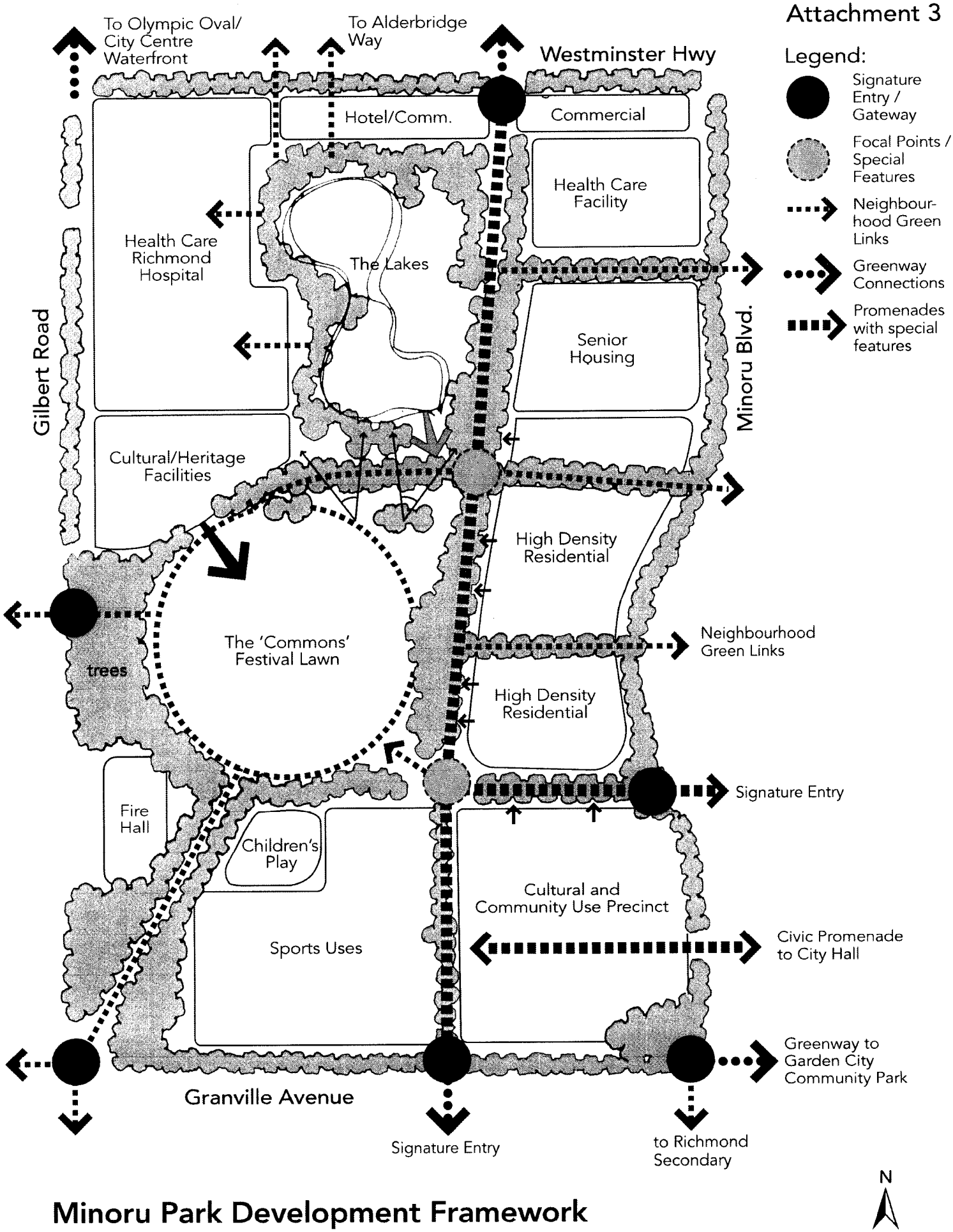
Minoru Park Precinct Context
Existing Site Conditions and Opportunities

N

Attachment 2

Guiding Principles	Development and Design Directives
1. Respect and build upon the history of the park and site	▪ Protect the heritage and significant trees; ▪ Develop an interpretation program using a combination of public art, signage, and programs; ▪ Emphasize the park's traditional role as a social gathering place for festivals and special events by creating a 'Festival Lawn'; ▪ Phase in new development in a sensitive and comprehensive manner; ▪ Retain high quality sports uses on the south side of the park; ▪ Work with sports and athletic groups to determine the best long term location for facilities within the park system.
2. Expand the 'green' role and value of the park in the City Centre	▪ Ensure that Minoru Lakes continues to provide an area of tranquillity and seasonal beauty; ▪ Develop a Tree and Landscape Management Plan to enhance and manage the existing landscape for the future; ▪ Respect the traditional landscape aesthetic of the lakes area and add landscape diversity in other parts of the park; ▪ Expand the lakes and unify the park by increasing visibility to the water; ▪ Add naturalized waterways to add diversity and as a sustainable practice for gathering storm water; ▪ Maximize the green edge and openness of the of the park to the street by concentrating major buildings into one area.
3. Establish an unique identity and civic role for Minoru Park that is complementary to other parks in the City Centre	▪ Create a unique destination park by focusing on a signature Civic Cultural/Community Use Precinct within the park; ▪ Expand arts and culture into the park with festivals, art shows, literary events, 'Theatre in the Park' programs, public art, sculpture gardens; ▪ Continue to support facilities for Seniors; ▪ Develop a comprehensive strategy for placement of recreational facilities in the City Centre to determine their long-term 'fit' in the park.

4. Create strong visual and physical links to the surrounding neighbourhoods and streets	▪ Develop a comprehensive pathway system throughout the park and linking to the street edges; ▪ Construct lit high quality north-south and east- west promenades within the park that link the major facilities and amenities; ▪ Provide special treatment along the edges of the park with particular attention to gateways and entry features ▪ Develop a major greenway along Granville Avenue linking to Garden City Community Park and the Garden City Lands; ▪ Create new public green links to Minoru Boulevard and Westminster Highway through redevelopment opportunities and working with adjacent property owners.
5. Minimize building footprints in the Park	▪ Focus all new building facilities in the south east corner to create vibrancy and minimize building footprints on the park; ▪ Create a cohesive campus feeling with pedestrian circulation around all the buildings; ▪ Create a strong signature civic promenade connecting Minoru Park to City Hall and No. 3 Road; ▪ Design the Minoru Boulevard entrance and driveway to be a 'green street' and greenway into the park; ▪ Design civic buildings to open to this north edge; ▪ Promote the integration of future developments with the new 'green street'.
6. Recognize the role of the park as a local residential neighbourhood park	▪ Provide open unprogrammed green space; ▪ Expand the playground to appeal to a wider age range ▪ Provide more seating and picnic areas; ▪ Create gathering places



Minoru Park Development Framework