

Schedule 4 to the Minutes of the
Public Hearing meeting of
Richmond City Council held on
Monday, October 19, 2020.

Dear Mayor Brodie and Councillors,

My name is Sharon MacGougan. I'm President of the Garden City Conservation Society and a life-long resident of Richmond.

I have two main concerns about this Polygon project:

1. Loss of habitat
2. Placement and size of the proposed park

I will also speak to:

3. Valuing of on-site trees, landscaping securities and QEP recommendations.

PHOTO #1 (please leave on)

Loss of habitat:

We have lost 3 billion birds since the 1970's. These are not some exotic species out there somewhere. These are our backyard birds, like finches and sparrows. The number one reason is habitat loss.

We have a choice. Do we continue to be the problem or will we be part of the solution? I'd like to think that we'll take action to remedy this significant loss for our future generations.

Habitat loss is happening in every neighbourhood. Mature trees and bird-friendly bushes have, for the most part, been replaced with sterile yards. Birds need food, shelter and water and without those, they die. Our parks are, for the most part, designed for people. So, if we remove bird habitat and don't, at the very least, replace it, we will keep losing our birds.

The big question is – how to mitigate ecological loss in neighbourhoods?

This project in its current form will not mitigate the loss. At present, the site is ecologically rich; filled with bird song and wildlife. If this project is carried out as planned, it will be a dead zone.

Placement and size of the proposed city park:

The area where the park is slated to be placed has no mature trees, only a hedgerow. It is an empty piece of land that will need new trees planted on. This doesn't make sense because right next to this area stands a forest. And, if we are concerned with habitat loss, why don't we keep it? The park area as proposed is small. I suggest a re-thinking of how good habitat and mature trees could be retained which would provide a real benefit to the wider community which includes the natural world. The mature trees to the north of the original park plan could be retained with the purpose of creating a bird-friendly natural park.

I know that Polygon has built many developments in Richmond. I'm sure that that company is aware of the ecological challenges Richmond among other communities, faces. And I'm sure, that given the right incentives, Polygon would want to step up to be part of the solution; to give back, ecologically speaking, to a community in which they have worked in for so long.

Valuing of on-site trees:

\$750 is not enough money to charge for a tree. Many of these trees are decades old "grandmother" trees. \$750 would pay for a branch. If trees were given a proper valuation (what the tree is really worth when everything is factored in) more thought might be given about removing them. Instead, we would find more creative ways of working around them. We are losing too many mature trees in many different ways, including mature tree unfriendly setbacks. More generous setbacks could play a big part in keeping trees.

One year is not long enough:

Currently developer's need to maintain (keep alive) a tree for one year. This is not long enough. We have far too many dead and dying street trees. Developers, including Polygon, need to take full responsibility for the trees that they plant. I have some examples to show:

PHOTO # 2

When my neighbourhood, close to Paulik Park, was redeveloped, I imagined leafy tree-lined streets filled with birdsong. This has not happened. Photos show street trees on Heather Street, between General Currie and Granville.

PHOTOS #3 TO 11 (I'll let you know when to change, thank you!)

These two blocks should be an ecological network supporting bird life between Paulik and Garden City community Park. Instead, this is one more lost opportunity for ecological richness and one more dead zone.

Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP):

"The City of Richmond **recommends** that where significant trees or vegetation exists on-site, the services of a QEP be secured to perform a survey and ensure that development activities are in compliance with all relevant legislation."

I suggest that **recommends** be replaced with **requires**. Thanks to Sofi Hindmarch, who tracked owl hunting activities on this proposed development site. But the point is, if he had not come forward would we know that the owl pair has hunted here for years? An owl family and a red-tailed hawk family were displaced from my neighbourhood through redevelopment. I spoke for

the hawk, resulting in the QEP process being followed. But I didn't know about the owl. If the QEP process is mandated our wildlife would be better served. It shouldn't be by chance that wildlife is protected.

In conclusion, the best solution would be that Polygon, through a philanthropic gesture, gives back this owl hunting field, allows a forest to stand for our future generations, and builds a much smaller development, with a nature friendly and sustainability focused mission. We all need to be part of the solution of ecological loss: Mayor Brodie, the Councillors, the citizens of Richmond and the companies that work here.

But, if that fails to spark hearts instead of minds, the next option would be to make a much larger natural park that keeps mature trees instead of cutting them.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon MacGougan
President, Garden City Conservation Society
7411 Ash Street,
Richmond, BC
V6Y 2R9