

NO: R239

COUNCIL DATE: December 14, 2015

---

## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **December 10, 2015**  
FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture** FILE: **6140 - 20/W**  
SUBJECT: **West Village Park – Preferred Concept Plan**

---

## RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Approve the Concept Plan for West Village Park (working name) attached as Appendix “I” to this report.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding the planning and design process for West Village Park and District Energy Centre, and to recommend the approval of the Concept Plan for the park.

## BACKGROUND

Surrey City Centre is in the midst of a transformation from a car oriented suburban town centre to a vibrant and walkable metropolitan centre. Parks play a crucial role in this transformation, and form key components of the urban infrastructure. The City Centre Plan envisions eight (8) new park sites across City Centre, to promote community gathering, improve the environment and to meet the open space and recreational needs of a growing and diverse population.

West Village Park (working name) is a new neighbourhood park site located in the West Village Neighbourhood of City Centre. The area is comprised of a mix of existing single family houses, 4-storey apartments along with new and under construction high-rise residential towers.

To support the development of the City Centre, the City has established Surrey City Energy. Surrey City Energy is the City's thermal energy utility that generates and delivers heat and hot water to buildings within the City Centre in an effort to improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide a resilient and stable long term supply of thermal energy.

West Village Park will provide a contemporary urban place for the community to enjoy the outdoors. The site will also feature Surrey City Energy's first permanent District Energy Centre. Currently, the site hosts one of Surrey City Energy's temporary District Energy Centres. The existing temporary District Energy Centre will be relocated to another location within the City Centre to support future growth upon completion of the permanent District Energy Centre.

The West Village Park has an area of 0.3 hectares (0.75 acres). The location of the Park is illustrated in the map attached as Appendix "II".

## **DISCUSSION**

When this project was initiated, a consultant team was retained to complete preliminary site design and analysis, including a technical review of the proposed District Energy Centre. This process enabled staff to determine the most efficient layout option for the District Energy Centre, while maximizing available park space. Adjacent neighbourhoods were directly consulted during this process to ensure their needs were addressed. The selected layout option for the District Energy Centre will accommodate an ultimate boiler capacity of 60 megawatts, which is sufficient to support a significant amount of development in the City Centre.

In addition to a technical review, a full public engagement strategy was developed to ensure that stakeholders and the public had opportunities to provide feedback on the project design. This process included a public open house, online CitySpeaks surveys, a meeting with the neighbours and a dedicated project web page. A site survey and environmental review were completed to support the planning and design process.

A total of 44 respondents completed the online CitySpeaks surveys and 15 people completed open house questionnaires. Participants were presented with background information and were asked to provide ideas and preferences regarding the park design. Two park concept options, attached as Appendix "III", were presented through the public consultation process to generate ideas and gather feedback.

### **Park Option A**

- Park Option A provides a variety of activities that support the changing character of the surrounding neighbourhood. The concept compliments the District Energy Centre with formal park spaces that reflect the angular forms of the proposed building. A central activity space supports play features for children, a collection of social gathering spaces and an informal lawn space. These activity areas are framed by planting beds that separate them from the adjacent roadways.

## Park Option B

- Park Option B is focused on providing a quiet green space for this developing urban community. Passive open spaces have been created adjacent to the large windows of the District Energy Centre to encourage park users to view the building's internal workings. The central park space features a large informal lawn with a gentle south facing slope that encourages use during the warmer months. The design features a communal long table that can be used by individuals or for community gatherings.

Participants were asked to select a preferred park option and provide feedback on the specific design elements of each. **Respondents were largely in support of Park Option B** (56% favoured Option B and 24% favoured Option A), which provided more passive open space and landscaping. Respondents also provided feedback on specific park amenities, including a children's play area, seating opportunities and landscaping, as well as the interface between the District Energy Centre and the park site.

Based on the feedback and preferences received through public engagement, staff have refined the park option into a preferred Concept Plan, presented within this report as Appendix "I". A full summary of the public engagement process is attached to this report as Appendix "IV".

## Preferred Concept Plan

The preferred Concept Plan for West Village Park builds on the existing natural features of the site while providing a variety of passive amenities for local residents. In the plan, the central area of the site features a large lawn with a gently south facing slope to encourage afternoon use. A network of pathways, seating areas and a long table provide opportunities for social interaction, while a children's play area adjacent to the central greenspace encourages family use.

Educational opportunities, such as interpretative signage, will also be considered through the detailed design process, to allow residents to learn about district energy. Along the east of the park, a large existing Japanese Maple tree will provide vibrant autumn colour. Additional larger canopy trees will be planted to provide the park with shade and visual presence.

The interface between the park and the District Energy Centre will animate the park with opportunities for public art as well as large floor to ceiling windows that will display the mechanical workings of the centre. An artist, Ericka Stocking, has been retained by Art Services to work in residence with the design team, with the objective of commissioning new public art for this site.

Park amenities, including the children's play and passive open spaces, have been located with consideration to public safety and privacy. Clear site lines from outside and within the park will help make this a safe and inviting place. All shrub beds will feature low plantings, and trees will be strategically placed to create spatial definition within the park without creating places to hide.

## **Park Naming**

In addition to providing feedback on park amenities, residents were also asked to comment on their preferred park name from a list of options, or write-in suggestions for a park name. The most popular name to-date is West Village Park, which reflects the proposed name for the neighbourhood within the City Centre Plan. Parks staff will continue to survey the community on potential park names through the detailed design process, and will report back to Parks Recreation and Sport Tourism Committee with a preferred name prior to construction.

## **Next Steps**

The Concept Plan for West Village Park was reviewed by the Parks, Recreation and Sport Tourism (PRST) Committee on November 18, 2015. The Committee supported the preferred Concept Plan.

Detailed design will begin following Council approval of the Concept Plan. The park will be constructed in coordination with the District Energy Centre, with an anticipated completion date in 2018. Any required site preparation or clearing will be scheduled following the 2016 bird nesting season.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The West Village Park project will support the objectives of the Sustainability Charter, specifically:

- Socio-Cultural Goal #6: *Create neighbourhoods that have distinct identities, diverse populations, lively public spaces that promote social interaction, and a range of accessible services and opportunities.*
- Socio-Cultural Goal #9: *Incorporate high quality design and beauty, including public art, in the public realm and the built environment.*
- Environmental Goal #4: *Establish a built environment that is balanced with the City's role as a good steward of the environment, incorporating opportunities for natural areas and urban wildlife, reducing energy and resource consumption in the built environment and expressing community environmental values in new developments.*

## **CONCLUSION**

West Village Park will be a neighbourhood amenity for many residents of City Centre, and will provide a site for the City's first District Energy Centre. The preferred Concept Plan will deliver the park amenities most requested by the community through a public engagement process while considering the City's broader goals for the development of a district energy utility and the incorporation of public art within the public realm.

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council approve the preferred Concept Plan for West Village Park as generally illustrated on Appendix "I" attached to this report and request that staff proceed with detailed design of the park.

Laurie Cavan  
General Manager,  
Parks, Recreation and Culture

cc: General Manager - Engineering

Attachments:

Appendix "I" – West Village Park Concept Plan

Appendix "II" – West Village Park Location

Appendix "III" – Park Concept Options

Appendix "IV" – Public Engagement Summary

# Appendix "I"

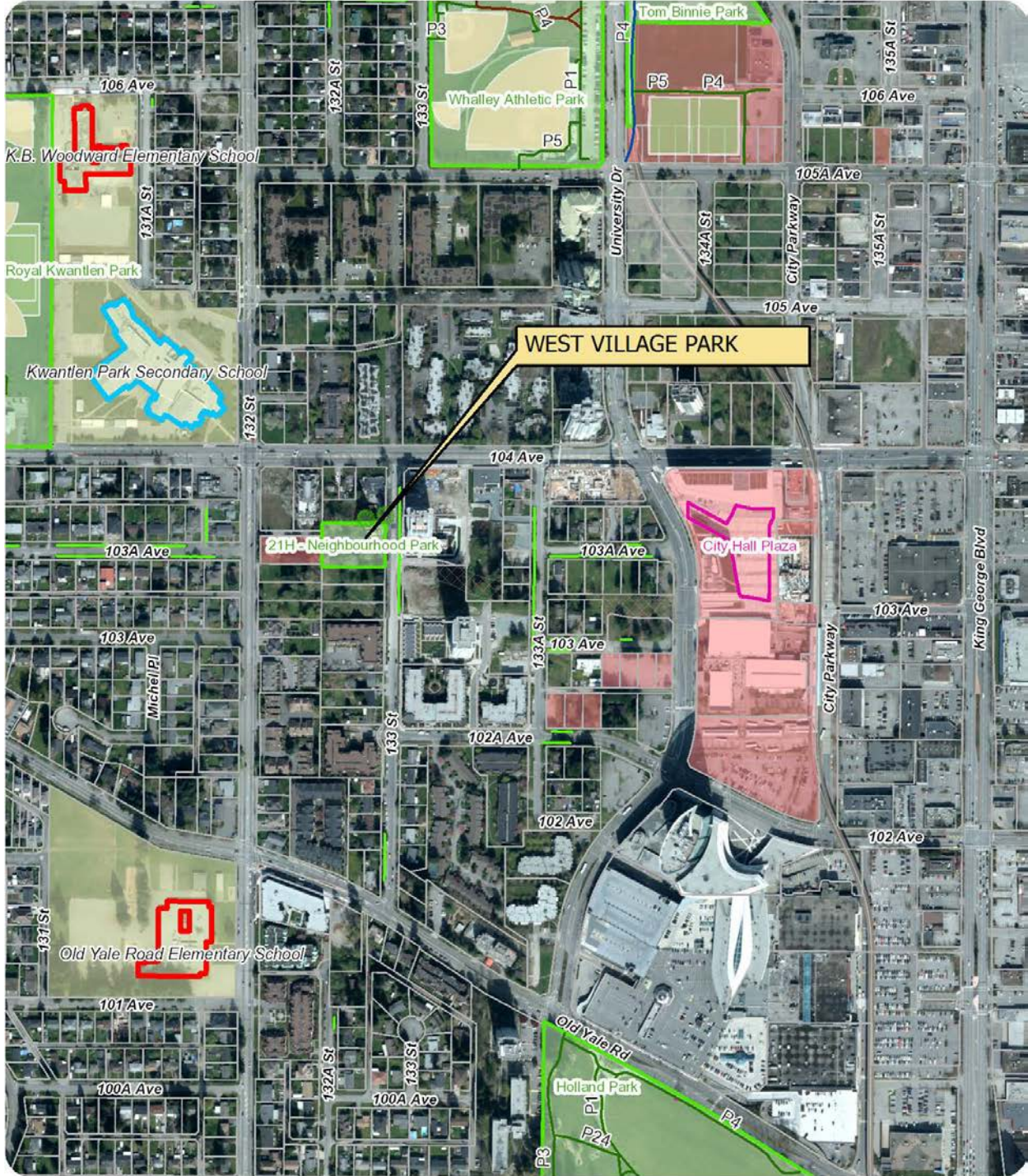
## WEST VILLAGE PARK + DISTRICT ENERGY UTILITY CENTRE

Preferred Park Concept -  
Green Commons





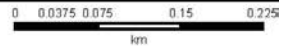
### West Village Park Location



Enter Map Description

Scale: 1:5,632

The data provided is compiled from various sources and is NOT warranted as to its accuracy or sufficiency by the City of Surrey. This information is provided for information and convenience purposes only. Lot sizes, legal descriptions and encumbrances must be confirmed at the Land Title Office. Use and distribution of this map is subject to all copyright and disclaimer notices at cosmos.surrey.ca

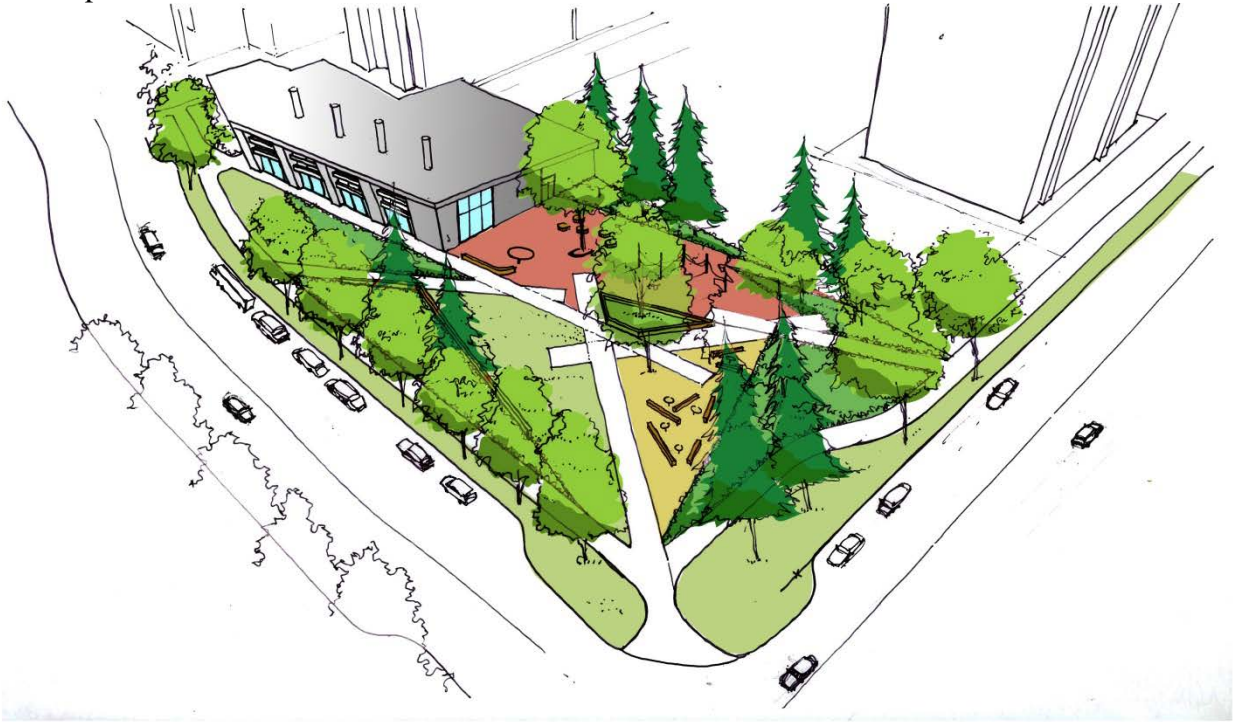


Map created on: 02/11/2015

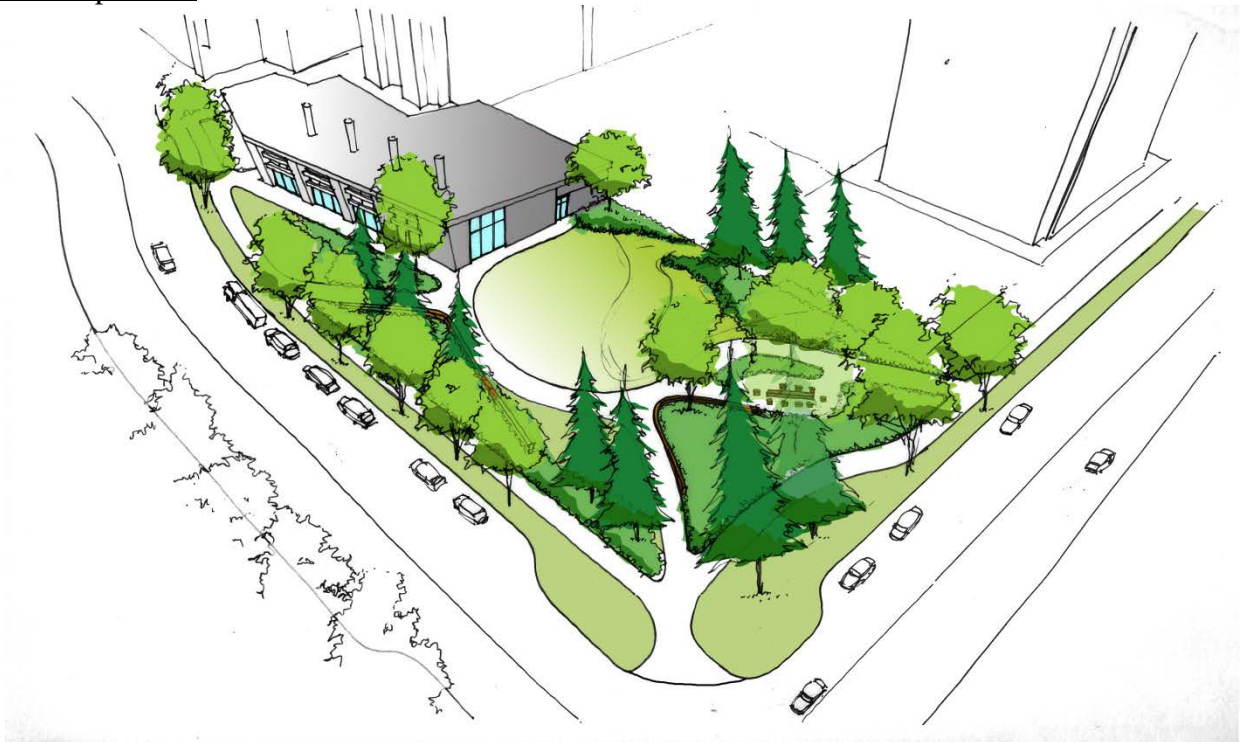


West Village, Preliminary Park Options

Park Option A



Park Option B





## Public Engagement Summary



November 2015

### WEST VILLAGE PARK *(preliminary name)* Community Engagement Summary

---

Parks has recently completed the preliminary planning and design process for West Village Park (preliminary name), a new 0.3 hectare (0.75 acre) mini-neighbourhood park in City Centre. This process included site surveys and assessments, a neighbours meeting, online CitySpeaks surveys and an open house on October 1, 2015.

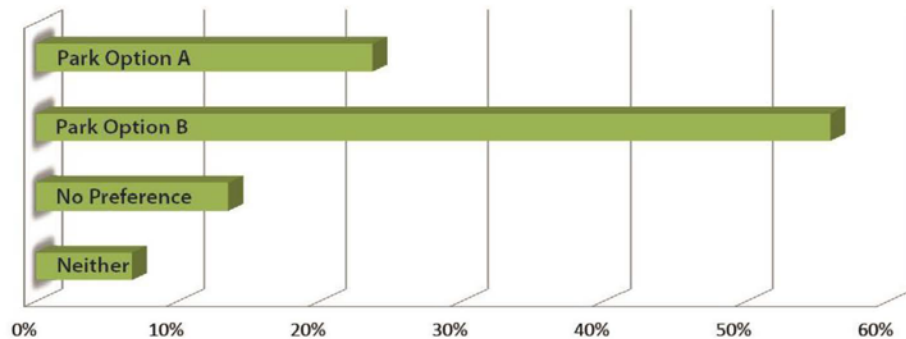
The City provided project information and updates through a dedicated project webpage, and advised residents on engagement opportunities through an on-site park sign, newspapers ads, neighbourhood mail-outs and social media. Consultation opportunities were aimed at generating ideas and gathering input from residents and potential park users.

#### Key Findings

Two concept options (Park Options A & B) were presented to the public for review and comment. A total of 44 respondents completed the online CitySpeaks surveys and 15 people completed questionnaires at the October 1 open house. The following findings summarize the feedback received through this process.

#### Preferred Park Option

Participants were asked to select a preferred park option and provide feedback on the specific design elements of each option. Respondents were largely in support of Option B (56%), which focused on providing passive open space and landscaping. Option A which, focused more on children’s play and formal social areas, was selected by 24% of respondents, while 21% had no preference or selected neither concept option.



Popular park amenities from both options included trees and landscaping, passive open space and lawn, tables and seating areas, and a children’s play area.

#### Greenspace

We heard that the park should build on the existing natural features of the site, and that the design should focus on providing greenspace to support a peaceful and relaxation park setting. Residents also liked the idea of planting new trees and providing landscaped areas within the park. There were also comments regarding the large Sequoia tree located north of the park, with support for protecting and eventually including it within the park.



# 63%

of people identified with the natural features of the site and wanted trees retained in the plan



## West Village Park – Community Engagement Summary

### Passive Open Space

Passive open space and lawn areas were widely supported by respondents. It was noted that the surrounding high density residential neighbourhood will generate a lot of park visitors looking for un-programmed open space to support casual activities like bocce, frisbee and picnicking. There were some concerns regarding the safety and security of open spaces, and suggestions to maintain open site lines from the adjacent roads and provide lighting within the park.

### Social Space

Areas for picnicking and socialization were supported in the plan, with a number of respondents (15%) noting a specific desire for park tables and seating areas. Equally, however, there were concerns with providing covered shelters and gathering areas that would encourage loitering and illicit activities within the park after dark.

### Children’s Play

Despite a preference for Park Option B, which did not have children’s play, several respondents (20%) specifically indicated that a refined layout should incorporate some element of children’s play. Residents felt it was important to address the needs of future children and families that will live in the surrounding neighbourhood.

### Dog’s in the Park



Some residents commented on the potential for a dog off-leash area, with residents both in favour and opposition. However, given the park’s small size, and the public’s direction to provide passive open space, landscaping and children’s play, a dog off-leash area is not compatible or suitable for this park. As such, Bylaw signage requiring dogs to be on-leash at all times will be posted. The City will explore other locations within City Centre for a dog off-leash area.

### Park Name

Respondents were provided a list of potential park names, as well as an option to write in name proposals. The most popular park name to-date (44% of respondents) is **West Village Park**, which reflects the proposed name for the neighbourhood within the City Centre Plan. Other popular names included Wellington, which was the family name of one of the original owners of the surrounding properties, and Dowling which was the original name of 103A Avenue. Other notable write in names included Central City Park, Greenall Park, Emerald Park, and Sequoia Park. Parks will continue to survey the community on park names through the detailed design process, and will select a preferred name prior to opening.



### SUMMARY

The City has completed public engagement for the design of West Village Park. The process included a range of public consultation opportunities to ensure that stakeholders and the public had meaningful opportunities to share ideas and provide feedback. Community outreach will continue through park development and once the park is open to the public.

Respondents were largely in support of a park layout that took advantage of the existing natural features of the site and provided opportunities for green space and passive use. The final park concept plan has been developed with consideration to the community feedback that was received. Amenities for children’s play and socialization have been included; while concerns of loitering and security were addressed through pathway placement, interface with the District Energy Centre and landscaping. The plan is consistent with majority public opinion and provides the amenities and function most desired by engaged residents.