



Fisherman's Wharf Management Plan

AUGUST 2009



Council Resolution

MINUTES – VICTORIA CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2009, AT 7:30 P.M.

Reports of the Committee

3. ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE STANDING COMMITTEE – July 23, 2009

1. Fisherman's Wharf Management Plan

It was moved by Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Luton, that Council adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the Fisherman's Wharf Management Plan be adopted by Council.
2. That staff report back on the feasibility and costs of daylighting the stream upon completion of soil testing/analysis and detailed design.

Carried

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Executive Summary

The management plan is a community-based project committed to identifying future improvements for the successful development of Fisherman's Wharf Park. The development of the Management Plan concludes a nine month process which has examined prior reports, hosted two public open houses, created and worked with a Fisherman's Wharf Advisory Committee, and completed an internal operations review. It responds to views expressed by the public as well as contributions from staff, findings from previous studies, field observations, and current trends in the City of Victoria.

The community engagement process lead to significant changes from the parks current use as a sports field and picnic area. A natural areas concept emerged focused on passive activities. The most substantial change to the fabric of the park is the proposed addition of a daylighted stream to promote biodiversity and an opportunity to interact with nature. Concerns regarding soil contamination will be a factor in developing the stream and consultants will be retained to help define the scope of the stream project. Other changes include a range of natural and enhanced planting zones, additional pathways, improved seating and gathering spaces, informal play space with berms and the development of a playground and plaza.

The 2009 capital budget has set aside \$400,000 for the initial development of the park. The proposed changes with the exception of the stream can be completed within this budget. The stream works are considered a second phase of this project and additional funding will be required. Funding can be obtained through a number of avenues including a future budget line item request to Council or using the remaining budget to encourage grants from groups interested in nature conservation and rehabilitation. There is a contingency plan in place if the budget for the stream can not be secured by 2015. Significant changes to the facilities and amenities provided in the park will also require an increase in operational dollars.

The proposed park design and amenities will provide a place for recreation, inspiration and refuge for City of Victoria residents and visitors.

VISION

This management plan is a community-based project committed to identifying future improvements for the successful development of Fisherman's Wharf Park. The vision is to create a park space to suit the needs of the surrounding neighbourhood while providing a place for recreation, inspiration and refuge for City of Victoria residents and visitors.

Introduction

At the turn of the Century the majority of North Americans lived in rural areas and small towns with open space readily available for leisure pursuits. Today most of us find ourselves clustered in Cities and in desperate need of places to experience nature and the outdoors. The emergence of this culture shift was anticipated by Frederick Law Olmstead and perhaps even John Blair as well as other 19th century visionaries who gave us New York Central Park, Vancouver Stanley Park, and Beacon Hill Park right here in Victoria.

The James Bay neighbourhood has 11 park spaces that serve the community including Fisherman's Wharf Park. Fisherman's Wharf Park is identified as a 1.56 ha community park site and the fourth largest park in the neighbourhood behind the west portion of Beacon Hill Park, Holland Point Park, and McDonald Park.

Fisherman's Wharf Park is currently used as a sports field with a small picnic area. The sports field is used for both baseball, rugby practice and soccer but is not irrigated and the playing surface is in poor shape for competitive sports. The picnic area is utilized by residents and some patrons of Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA) Fisherman's Wharf commercial area.

Utilities in the park include a covered storm sewer for Catchment Area 607 under the SE portion of the property, a proposed underground storm by-pass along the eastern boundary and a Storm Water Rehabilitation Unit installed in 2004. All storm water drains through GVHA property before entering Heron Cove.

Erie and St Lawrence streets define the south and east boundaries of Fisherman's Wharf Park. The south side of St. Lawrence St. is residential housing and the west side of Erie St has a mixture of residential housing and commercial services. To the west is the Shoal Point development with commercial space occupying some of the lower level units. Along the north park boundary is GVHA Fisherman's Wharf. This area is a mixture of commercial space and moorage space used by float homes and is identified in the neighbourhood plan as a marine commercial and tourist hub.

James Bay requires 10.35 ha of park space to meet to meet the current City minimum standard of .93ha of community park space per 1000. Based on 2006 census information James Bay far exceeds this standard with a total of 47 ha which includes the western half of Beacon Hill Park. As for neighbourhood parks James Bay is also one of only three neighbourhoods that meet the minimum standard of 0.61ha/1000 for neighbourhood parks. It should be noted these are the standards from the Official Community Plan and will be updated with completion of the Parks Master Plan in 2009.

The Fisherman's Wharf Management Plan reviewed other relevant documents that included:

- 2008 Citizen Survey
- 2008 Soil Quality Assessment
- 2008 Victoria Harbour Pathway Plan
- 2008 Victoria Pedestrian Management Plan
- 2007 City of Victoria Parks Survey
- 2006 Census Canada Age Profiles
- 2003 Shoal Point, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, and City of Victoria Master Development Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding
- 2002 Sports Fields Permitting and Allocations for Victoria Parks, Recreation and Community Development
- 1995 Bicycle Masterplan
- 1993 James Bay Neighborhood Plan
- 2003 Greenways Plan

The pertinent details relating to these plans for Fisherman's Wharf Park have been highlighted in Appendix 1.

Community Participation

Community involvement in the preparation of this management plan started very early in the process through preliminary meetings with the James Bay Neighbourhood Association (JBNA). A decision to create an advisory committee representative of the Community resulted from these early meetings. Representatives from the following groups were invited to participate as members of the Fisherman's Wharf Advisory Committee (FWAC) which met on a monthly basis.

- James Bay Neighbourhood Association
- James Bay Athletics Association
- Bays United Football Club
- Greater Victoria Harbour Authority
- Reef Residents
- Fisherman's Association
- Float homes Residents Association

Creation of a well designed park to suit the communities needs is the underlying premise of successful park planning and community development. The advantages to encouraging community participation and working closely with FWAC are numerous and include;

- Increased community empowerment
- Captures the natural enthusiasm and talents of citizens
- A welcome source of inspiration and new ideas
- Results in a high quality open-minded decision making process
- Encourages future community participation
- A plan that responds to local needs and aspirations

Open House #1 Result Summary

The first open house on October 21st 2008 was well attended and 112 people submitted surveys to staff. Over 80% of the respondents were from the James Bay Neighbourhood and 65% of the total respondents were over the age of 55. It should be noted that the median age for the area is 49 so the open house results had a slight age skew in favour of the 55+ age category.

A long list of potential park facilities and amenities were presented to the respondents and the features/amenities identified to have the highest value (top five) are:

- Natural plantings
- Walking
- Random seating
- Gathering areas
- Streams

Appendix 2 contains a prioritized list of other features/amenities as identified by attendees at the open house.

The results from the Open House Survey mirrored the results of a city wide Parks Survey completed in October 2007 with regards to desired elements in a park. The city wide survey identified the following as high value park amenities:

- Local neighbourhood parks
- Natural parks and urban forests
- Access to water and beaches
- Trails and pathways in parks
- Parks with quiet, passive areas

Overall, the results from these surveys suggest that more emphasis should be placed on natural features with a focus on passive recreation.

Open House #2 Result Summary

Five park concepts were presented to the public for review at the second and final open house held on February 10th 2009. This session was also well attended and 122 people filled out surveys. Over 86% of the respondents were from the James Bay Neighbourhood and 67% of the total respondents were over the age of 55. Only 12% were under the age of 40 and no surveys were received from people under the age of 25.

The park concepts ranged from an active sports field reflecting the status quo through to natural areas with a daylighted stream and meadow habitat. The five concepts were identified as follows:

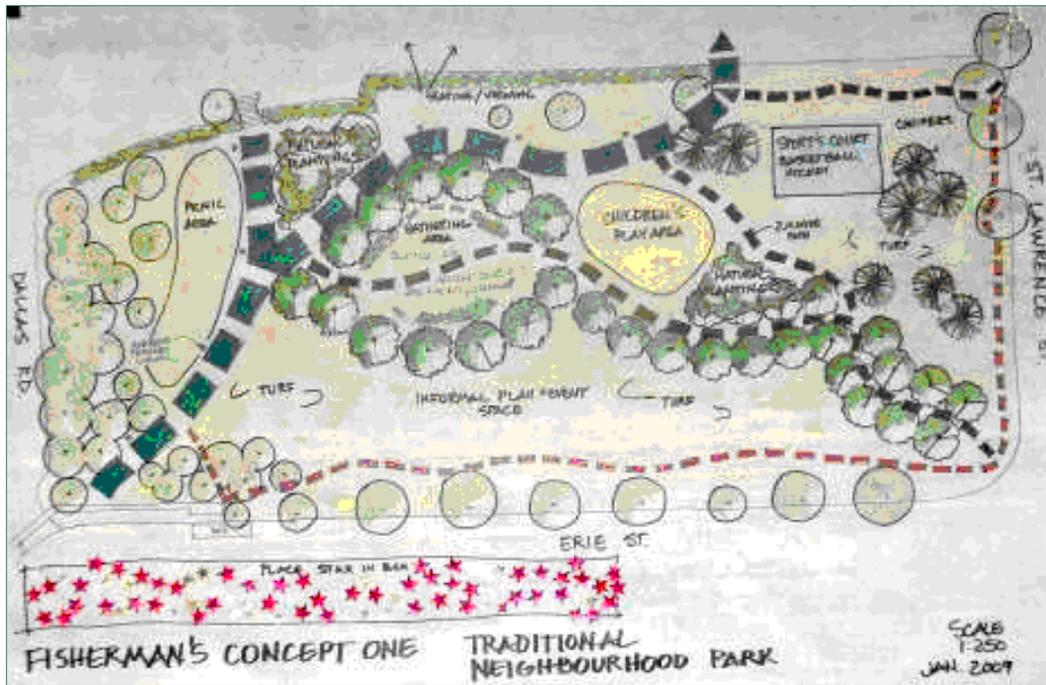


FIGURE 1: CONCEPT 1 TRADITIONAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

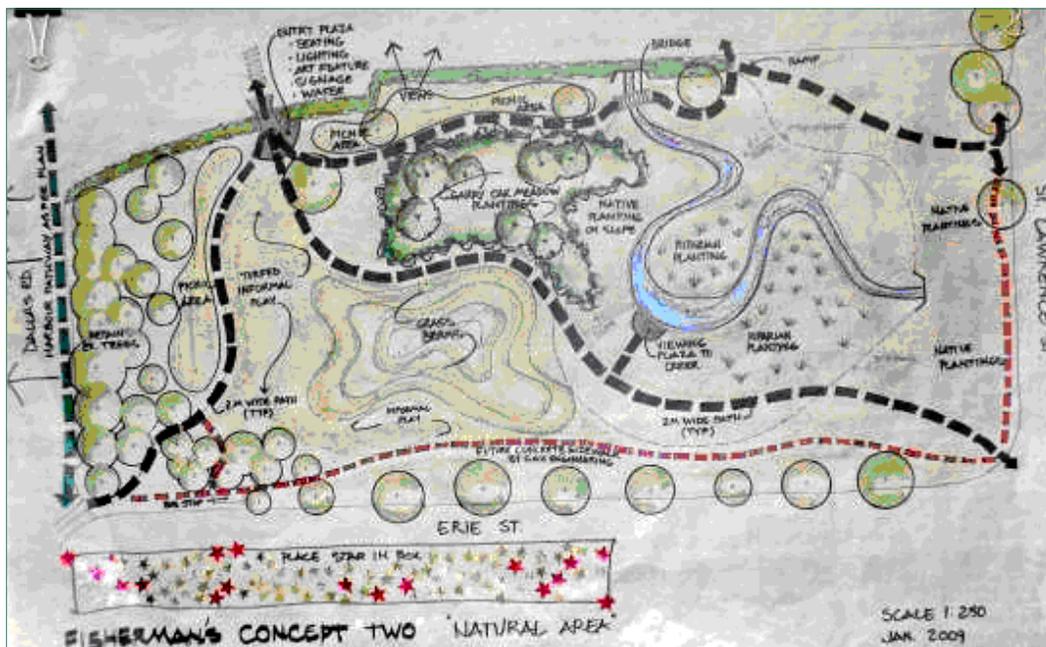


FIGURE 2: CONCEPT 2 NATURAL AREA

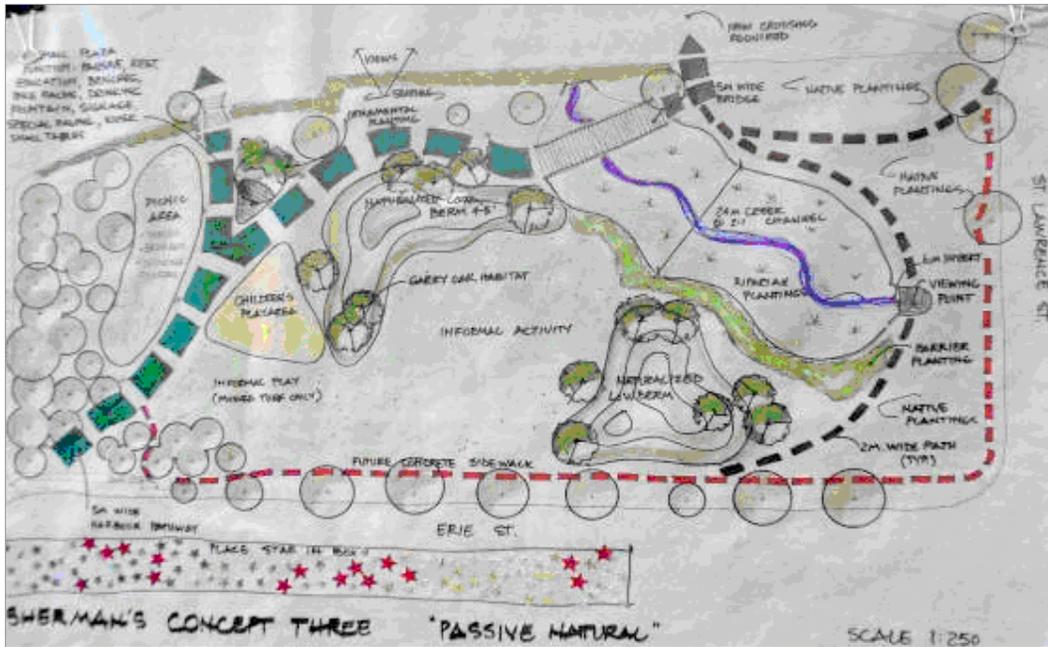


FIGURE 3: CONCEPT 3 PASSIVE NATURAL

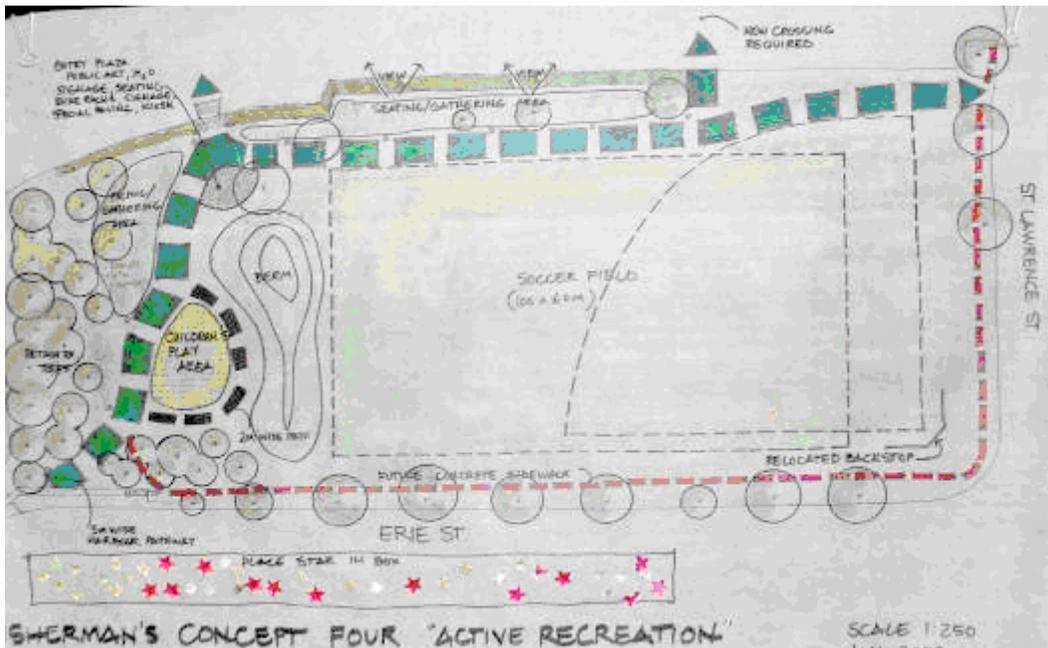


FIGURE 4: CONCEPT 4 ACTIVE RECREATION

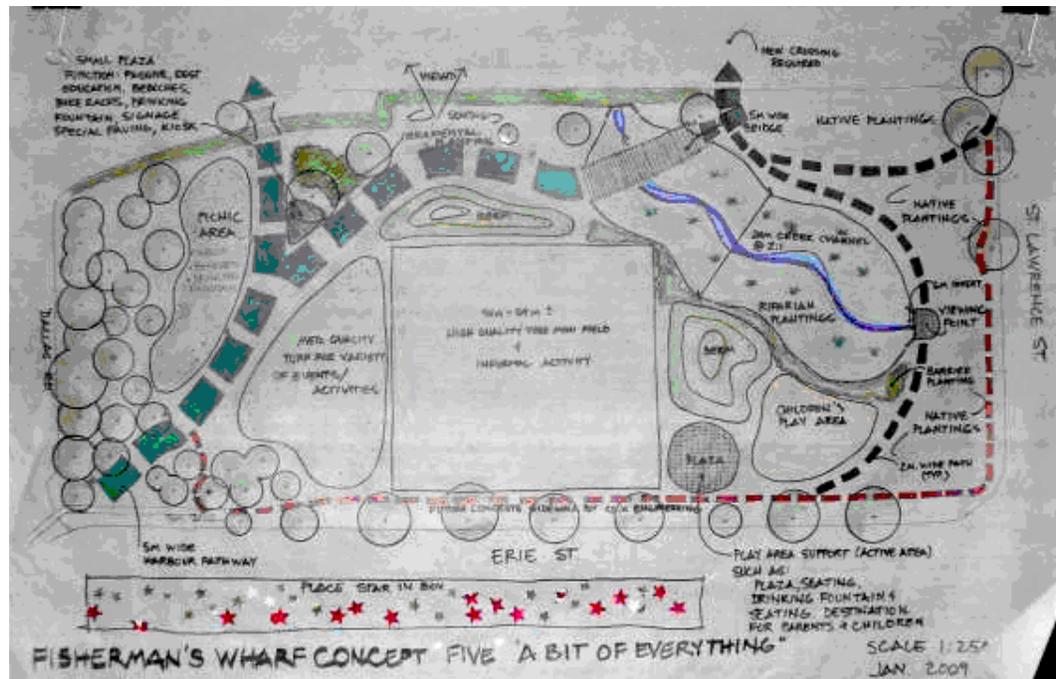


FIGURE 5: CONCEPT 5 A BIT OF EVERYTHING

Although some of the concepts had similar elements the natural areas and passive use plans were clear front runners as selected by the public. SEE APPENDIX 3.

Walkways, streams and natural areas dominated the comments when respondents were asked to write down their top two amenities.

The results from both open houses were consistent with the findings from the 2007 Resident Survey.

Open House Results Discussion

Overall, the public participation process played a critical role in shaping the development of the preferred park concept by providing local knowledge, views and values.

The desire for natural areas amongst Victoria citizens expressed in the 2007 Parks Residents Survey as well as the two open houses for the redevelopment of Fisherman's Wharf Park is an emerging trend in Parks and Recreation. Beyond the benefits of exercise a growing body of research shows that contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health. This contact is especially critical for young children.

The high priority placed on trails and walking is supported by research showing the far reaching benefits of trails and walking. Studies commonly link walking to reduced risk of premature death, reduced risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and non-insulin-dependent diabetes. Walking is one of the most popular activities enjoyed by a wide range of age classes.

Playgrounds ranked in the middle the surveys. Based on age results the majority of survey participants were likely empty-nesters or individuals with older children as opposed to parents who engage with young children on a regular basis. Play areas still ranked proportionally high comparison to other park amenities when respondents were asked to identify their top two amenities. This is likely because playgrounds are viewed as a major component in most park spaces.

Sports Fields were among several other amenities that were not emphasized as high priority among the survey respondents. Upon further analysis of the data it was interesting to note that the strongest support for sports fields came from the 41–55 age group at Open House 2.

From the community consultation process a greater understanding of the goals and objectives for the development of the Management Plan emerged.

Park Planning Goals and Objectives

The major goal of this management plan is to identify the long term future of the park based on proactive community engagement. This process lead to the following key objectives:

- Park character will be predominantly natural
- Develop a daylighted stream that highlights the importance of water
- Create opportunities for informal play and small events
- Establish small intimate gathering areas
- Function as an important link in the Harbour Pathway System
- Create a variety of walking experiences
- Create a variety of planting zones
- Define spaces using landscape features such as berms and pathways
- Develop opportunities for public art and learning
- Enhance scenic views of harbour
- Promote park user safety
- Establish cost effective maintenance practices

Park Program Element Recommendations

These recommendations are a reflection of the community process, literature review, staff insight and the desire to meet the objectives for the successful long term development of Fisherman's Wharf Park. They are based on the following key design elements and amenities that form the character of the park.

- Stream Daylighting
- Planting
- Harbour Pathway
- Secondary Pathways
- Seating
- Picnicking
- Plaza
- Informal gathering/play area
- Playground
- Viewing opportunities

Washrooms and sports fields are also discussed as key elements but are not proposed for this site due to public feedback about these facilities during the consultation process.

A summary of the recommendations is provided as Appendix 4.

Stream Daylighting and Design

Urban streams present some of the most important but challenging restoration opportunities faced by municipalities. Development of daylighted streams often requires a paradigm shift from grey infrastructure back to green infrastructure. In recent years many municipalities around the world have successfully daylighted streams including local projects in Victoria, Saanich, and Esquimalt. These municipalities have realized the benefits of green storm water management and increased biodiversity.



KINSMEN GORGE PARK

STREAM BACKGROUND

Fisherman's Wharf historically had a stream running through the park according to anecdotal evidence provided by members of the community. The area has been filled and the actual streambed is approximately 5–6m below the surface.

In 2007 City engineering staff with public input identified stream daylighting as a possible storm water management alternative for the low lying areas in James Bay during the public consultation process. After reviewing the alternatives it was decided that a buried storm drain by-pass culvert would be installed along the northeast portion of the park to better suit the needs of the entire project and meet immediate concerns. During this process a soil analysis was completed by a consultant that indicated sporadic high levels of metals in the 22 test holes throughout the park, however, hydrocarbon related parameters were not found. Parks staff reviewed the results and felt there was an acceptable level of risk to proceed with daylighting as an option while acknowledging that it is possible that a significant portion of the excavated materials would have to be moved off-site.

Although daylighting the stream would no longer serve as the primary storm water management solution the idea of a natural stream in this area continued to resonate with residents. The creek now has the benefit of potentially becoming inter-tidal rearing habitat because the storm gates for this outlet at Heron Cove are no longer required due to the installation of the storm drain by-pass.

STREAM BACKGROUND, CONTINUED

The notion of stream enhancement holds high values amongst citizens. In addition to the support from the open house process, preliminary results from the sustainable framework survey identified aquatic ecosystems as the third top goal area respondents felt the city had to do more work.

HABITAT BENEFITS

Improving aquatic ecosystems can be accomplished directly and indirectly. Water quality management and habitat creation for birds and fish are direct results of daylighting the stream. In-direct improvements of aquatic eco-systems can be achieved by creating a social awareness and education program about the importance of stream habitats and water quality. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways including community art projects, youth and adult learning programs and interpretive signs. Vistas created by the stream channel is another example of an indirect benefit.

Providing inter-tidal habitat with possible cutt-throat trout and salmon rearing habitat may require an upgrade of the culvert under GVHA property connecting Heron Cove or a traffic bridge. The current inter-tidal gate would also have to be removed to allow the area to backfill with tides. Both these options should be evaluated in a report from a fluvial geomorphologist before proceeding with the final design. Permission from the GVHA would also be required.

STREAM DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Currently, the drawbacks to daylighting the stream include polluted run-off water from the local streets and unknown contamination levels in the soil. The approximate depth of the stream bed is 6m below the current elevation and in order to achieve this depth considerable excavation will have to be undertaken. If the contamination levels in the soil are high the construction of the stream side slopes will have to be deal with potential leaching activity. Preliminary soil analysis has been done on the site and high metal concentrations were identified in several bore holes. More work is required to identify the level of soil contamination in the proposed area of the daylighted stream. Depending on the results of the analysis the removal costs of the fill to an off-site location can be substantial.

The city's engineering department has placed a vortex to remove heavy metals and other large particulate matter from existing water flowing through the park. However, at water quality tests show that the stream would still be high in Fecal Coliform counts. Work will be undertaken by engineering to reduce these counts in the next few years. Completing the James Bay storm water project will improve the quality of the water entering the proposed daylighted channel and enhance biodiversity.

A consultant should be retained in order to identify the cost magnitude to daylight the stream, model the flows, develop the stream design and review potential contaminated soil treatment options. The first phase is to complete a thorough soil analysis to determine the cost associated with moving or treating any contaminated soils. The second phase would be to develop detailed drawing and stream channel modeling. Some design considerations include stream bank grades, access to the water, slope stabilization and seasonal flows.

The costs associated with developing the park with a daylighted creek are expected to be higher than what has been anticipated in the current budgets. One option among several possibilities to fund the project would be through government grants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stream daylighting be developed in phases in accordance with approved budgets and other funding sources
- Retain consulting services to determine the soil contamination levels and associated remediation costs
- Retain a consultant to develop detailed stream channel design and modeling scenarios
- Work with GVHA to promote inter-tidal fish friendly culvert or bridge connecting Fisherman's Wharf Park to Heron Cove
- Implement an art project reflecting stream values in the event costs or technical issues delay the daylighted stream project beyond 2012
- Daylighting of stream be re-visited with the community in 2015 if sufficient funding is not available in the coming years

Planting Zones

Humans enjoy both refuge from the outside world and rejuvenation from within when experiencing natural and enhanced planted areas. Natural areas also provide critical habitat for a wide range of species. Fisherman's Wharf Park can strive to find a balance between the desires of humans and the needs of healthy natural ecosystems. Achieving this balance requires compromises and long term adaptive management strategies from both parks staff and natural ecosystems.



BEACON HILL PARK

NATURAL AREAS PLANTING

Natural areas and associated plantings were consistently supported by the community and are a major focal point in developing this Management Plan. The overall design will enhance natural resources in this park and contribute to the urban forest within the community. Habitat creation, human-nature interactions, biodiversity, education and stewardship are some of the opportunities increased natural areas will provide. It is anticipated that the majority of the east side of the park and the stream will be composed of natural areas that include riparian habitat and native meadows.

Creating natural areas on relatively new sites is a long term strategy. This is especially relevant on this site considering its primary use was a sports field built on fill. Patience and adaptive management will be required for successful establishment of natural ecosystems. Formulating the right balance between human uses and functional ecosystems is necessary to ensure an environmentally responsible design. The following is a short list of design considerations that need to be addressed.

- Streamside natural plantings will provide integration with the stream by providing habitat, and a food source for species which rely on the stream.
- Invasive species often move into habitats via fluvial and other processes so it is important that the establishment of native species along the stream banks is closely monitored and invasive species are controlled
- Currently there are minimal invasive species throughout the park with exception to the rock walls adjacent to GVHA lands and Dallas road. A proactive approach should be implemented to re-establish these areas with low maintenance native species.
- Viewscapes are important in this setting and large native trees should be selected carefully to ensure harbour views are maintained for adjacent residents. The trees should also be spaced appropriately to ensure minimal disruption to sightlines. Alternatively, trees and other elements will be used by designers to form and accentuate key views.
- Predicted changes to the climate and establishment of native species in altered landscapes will still require irrigation especially during the initial years.
- Determining species to be planted will require careful consideration of long-term planting plans to establish a natural presence to the area 75 years from now. Climate change should also be considered and notably the shore pines seem to do well in shallow dry soils
- Education and stewardship opportunities should consider developing a small area for native plant interpretation. Interpretation could be achieved in a number of ways including traditional First Nations edible plants, perma-culture guilds or species identification.

The park currently has number of native and non-native trees. The largest clump of trees is in the current picnic area along the east boundary. An established stand of trees in the park is of great benefit to reaching the natural objectives of this management plan. Established trees provide biodiversity and these trees have considerable bird activity in throughout much of the year. Overall, the present tree canopy should not be significantly reduced unless they are considered a safety hazard.

ENHANCED ZONES

Enhanced planting could occur along the Harbour Pathway, in the plaza, in portions of the west side, or at entry areas. Enhanced zones may use native species but the use of ornamental species is also anticipated. Due care should be taken when selecting plants to ensure that they will not adversely affect their surrounding environment.

Proper plant selection and propagation is key to successful long term establishment of all planting zones in the park

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish a variety of planting zones
- Dispersed native planting zones be the primary feature of the park
- Irrigation be provided to ensure successful plant establishment
- Provide opportunities for interpretation and education opportunities
- Use plantings to protect the stream banks, reduce soil erosion and provide barriers to limit stream access where required
- Replace invasive species with natural plantings
- Develop a control and contain strategy for the blackberries on the north rock wall
- Maintain current trees in park but prune as required with the exception of the plums and cherries which can be phased out over time
- Remove trees that have been identified as a safety hazard
- Develop Gary-oak meadow grasses and wildflowers in the parks nursery

Pathways

Pathways are an important component of most parks. They facilitate an active lifestyle and help promote health and well-being of the surrounding community. They not only provide access to and within the site but also help define different landscape and activity zones. The pathway system in Fisherman's Wharf Park consists of the Harbour Pathway and a mix of secondary trails.



HTO PARK – TORONTO

HARBOUR PATHWAY

Although the Harbour Pathway was not shown on Natural Areas Concept (CONCEPT 2) at the open house there was both verbatim comments and verbal discussion supporting the Harbour Pathway in Fisherman's Wharf Park throughout the process. Further support for routing the Harbour Pathway through the park came from the Fisherman's Wharf Advisory Committee.

The Harbour Pathway Plan identifies Fisherman's Wharf as a special place along the walkway and recommends the pathway follow the shoreline along the GVHA property before turning south bound up Dallas Rd. However, stakeholders identified several complications with this proposed alignment in achieving the desired width of seven meters.

Developing the multi-use portion of the pathway within the Park is beneficial for achieving the desired width of five meters. The 5m asphalt path will connect a Erie Street and Dallas Road intersection to the the stairs. A secondary accessible asphalt 3m trail will also be developed as an alternative connection to the proposed bridges that cross Heron Cove and Raymur Point. Pathway lighting should be installed for safety and to help identify the Harbour Pathway. The pedestrian only portion of the Harbour Pathway will remain along Harbour Pathway Plan alignment where existing sidewalks meet the intent of the plan.

Commuter bike paths are identified along St. Lawrence and Erie st. The primary focus of the Harbour Pathway is for recreational use and enjoyment as opposed to an active transportation route for commuters reducing the chance of conflicts amongst user groups.

SECONDARY PATHWAYS

Inside the park a 500m loop pathway will be identified to promote healthy living and exercise using a combination of the secondary pathways, the Harbour Pathway and sidewalks. This specific length will help patrons track their distance walked and is especially effective for prescribed walking distances from a health professional.

Secondary paths will also provide routes to interact with the stream or connect the features in the park. Overall the pathway system will be an integral component to ensure the enjoyment of this park for many years to come.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Construct a 5m Harbour Pathway in the Park connecting the Dallas Road Erie Street intersection to the north stairs with low-level lighting
- Construct a 3m Harbour Pathway in the Park connecting the north stairs to proposed Heron Cove Bridge crossing connection in the GVHA parking lot
- Create a pathway system in the park providing a 500m loop
- Create a pathway providing access to stream banks for interaction and learning opportunities
- Develop the sidewalk to meander along Erie Street and St. Lawrence Street

Seating and Gathering Spaces

A variety of seating areas located in the park will allow for picnicking, viewing, resting and gathering. Benches and tables in the picnic area, along the streamside, along north vista and a feature plaza will provide ample opportunities for viewing, socializing and resting areas.

Café style seating has become popular in many parks as it allows for intimate interaction in an outdoor environment. Positive interactions among users could be further enhanced by providing patterns for chess, backgammon, and snakes and ladders patterns on table surfaces.

The vistas along the north slope overlooking the harbour will be reserved for memorial benches and a group seating area. Benches will be placed along this slope at angles to ensure an acceptable comfort level of people sitting within close proximity of the Harbour Pathway. In addition to traditional memorial benches sculpted rocks or natural looking structures with memorial plaques are suitable and could be suggested when consulting the public about memorial benches.



BEMBERTON HARBOURSIDE

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Evaluate existing condition of benches in park and replace as required
- Establish a variety of seating areas and furnishings throughout the park with emphasis on blending into the natural features of the park
- Expand the memorial bench guidelines to include natural furnishings for use in Fisherman's Wharf park and elsewhere in the City of Victoria

Picnicking

Both tourists and residents will be attracted to the waterfront views of Fisherman’s Wharf Park picnicking. The close proximity of food services should further support the use of the park for both large groups and individuals seeking a place to rest and eat.

Blending the picnic area into the park setting will be accomplished by providing the picnic area amongst the trees and close to the proposed play area in the northwest corner. The treed area will provide benefits of shade, wind and rain protection. Concerns about the current state of the area being uninviting is based on wind exposure and low lying tree branches. Although wind is difficult to manage on a waterfront park due to wind tunnels created from the surrounding buildings, the overhead canopy can be pruned and raised to make the area more inviting.



FISHERMAN'S WHARF PARK

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a picnic area amongst the trees along the west boundary with a higher ratio of tables placed at the north end of this area
- Conduct tree pruning and a higher level of maintenance to this area
- Assess the existing trees for health and safety and remove as required
- Ensure a tree line is maintained through succession along the west edge and throughout the area

Plazas

Plazas range in size and character and have long been identified as community gathering areas. Plazas can be grand in scale serving the whole community similar to historical squares located in many European and South American communities. They can also be smaller in scale and be designed as focal points in park spaces. Survey results suggest support for gathering areas but natural area creation remains the primary function therefore the plaza will play a supporting role within the character of the park.



CRIDGE PARK

Implementing a small hard surfaced plaza at the junction of the Harbour Pathways will provide an important gathering area within the park. Furnishings, wayfinding signs, water and bike racks should be incorporated into the plaza design. An art feature representing the history of Fisherman’s Wharf Park should be a main feature. This feature could be created using fisherman’s floats and netting or an element representative of a boat.

RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a small plaza at the junction of the Harbour Pathway

Informal Play Area and Event Space

Informal play areas were incorporated into all the concepts presented at the second open house for Fisherman’s Wharf Park. Frisbee, pick-up soccer or other informal games are examples of some activities anticipated to take place in this area. A flat turf area best serves these activities and helps prevent injuries by providing users with predictable slopes. This space can also be used for small community events.



VICTORIA WEST PARK

RECOMMENDATION

- Create a functional open turf area to provide opportunities for informal play and community events

Viewing Areas

The Harbour views from the elevated surface of the park are perhaps some of the most aesthetically pleasing views of downtown, Vic West and the blue bridge from public land. These views can be preserved and enhanced by ensuring there is adequate space for the provision of several benches or tables along the parks edge. Natural gardens could be placed between the nodes to provide intimate viewing settings. This area should be largely reserved for the establishment of memorial benches as discussed in the seating recommendations. Stationary viewing scopes at some of these nodes could further enhance the experience.



FISHERMAN'S WHARF PARK

Taking into consideration erosion control, viewing points along the proposed stream will also provide enjoyment for all ages. Controlling erosion of the stream banks is an important consideration when enhancing viewing opportunities along the stream. A viewing area at the head of the stream or at the bridge along the pathway should also be developed.

RECOMMENDATION

- Construct viewing areas along the north edge of the park considering intimacy and comfort
- Provide viewing nodes that focus on the stream and other newly created viewsapes

Playground

Although a playground was not ranked high in the open house results it is still an attraction for young families in the area or for grand parents to visit with their grand children. According to Stats Canada the neighbourhood had approximately 800 children under the age of 14 in 2006. Due to the waterfront location it is reasonable to expect many families from outside the neighbourhood will also visit this area. However, as a result of the medium ranking, proposed playgrounds should blend into the concept of a natural area. A restrained design that mimics natural shapes and colours should be provided rather than a "traditional" package playgrounds with its brightly colored plastic.



AALHOLM SCHOOLYARD

This playground or more appropriately termed "playscape" with regards to the natural objectives of Fisherman's Wharf Park could also incorporate fisherman's themes. A climbing net could supplement this area to signify the netting commonly found on fishing vessels and natural play equipment could be incorporated into the design.

The space between Dallas Road and the Harbour Pathway will function as the main gathering node for small groups and picnicking which is complementary to the children's play area. These high use nodes are concentrated in one area and blend into surrounding trees. This helps ensure that they do not dominate the landscape of the park as it might if located in the flat open areas.

In addition to the main playground opportunities for children's play should be considered utilizing berms and natural areas throughout the park. Nature deficit amongst children is becoming a growing concern so opportunity for children to interact with the natural ecosystems of the park should be encouraged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Construct a play area based on natural components and playscapes
- Consider designing a Fisherman's theme into the play elements
- Construct the play area close to the picnicking in the Northwest portion of the park
- Encourage interaction with the natural environment of the park

Washrooms

The private washrooms that the public were using at Shoal Point have been closed for public access indefinitely. A review of the Master Development Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding regarding the development of 40 Heron (Shoal Point) does not address the issue of public washrooms.

Additional commercial washrooms are available for public use at the west end of GVHA Wharf during commercial vending hours. Currently the vending hours are seasonal and the washrooms are open from 8 a.m.–10 p.m. during the summer.

Parks with passive space being the main component of the park generally do not require a permanent washroom building. Washroom buildings are better suited and budgeted for parks with sport fields or at the head of long trail systems not found within the City of Victoria.

The provision of temporary washrooms in the park could be considered for special events or summer programs as required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Construction of a permanent washroom building not be undertaken as part of this plan
- Encourage use of temporary washrooms for programs of during large public events

Sports Fields

A multi-use sports field has historically been the main use of Fisherman's Wharf Park. Organized sports have had permitted use on this field for over 30 years and the last 15 years it has been primarily designated a soccer field in the fall with softball in the summer. Removing this field from the inventory leaves a gap that needs to be addressed elsewhere in the City.

Recently permitted groups refrained from using the field because it has not had the required yearly maintenance to make it a safe and enjoyable playing surface. Permitted softball groups have also suggested that the field is too small for adult games of baseball/slo-pitch due to the advances in bat technology. Further evidence from the open house feedback suggested that groups refrained from using their permits due to lack of parking, and cold gusty winds during soccer season.

The James Neighbourhood Plan identifies the park as lying in tourist district sub-area and during the community consultation process FWAC and some survey respondents felt that their sports field needs were well served by MacDonald Park and Beacon Hill Park. During the early planning stages retaining the soccer field was ranked as middle priority based on the results of open house 1. Two of the concepts presented at the second open house presented options for permitted use for soccer however natural areas concepts clearly had more support from the respondents.

However, the importance of losing a sports field to organized sport should not be overlooked and additional opportunities for playtime should be identified. A recent example of increasing playtime using an existing footprint is the synthetic turf fields at Topaz.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Decommission existing sport field and cancel associated permits
- Identify opportunities for increased permitted soccer use in other areas in the City in the 2009 Parks Master plan
- Consult softball groups and evaluate the need for additional softball space

Concept Plan

Based on the above recommendations, public input, and FWAC meetings the following concept plan was developed. This plan provides a balance of human desires while taking bold steps to daylight a creek and create “natural areas”. The concept also highlights the vistas, picnic areas, Harbour Pathway, playground and provides passive use space for events and informal play. The concept plan is the foundation for detailed designs to accomplish the vision for Fisherman’s Wharf Park.

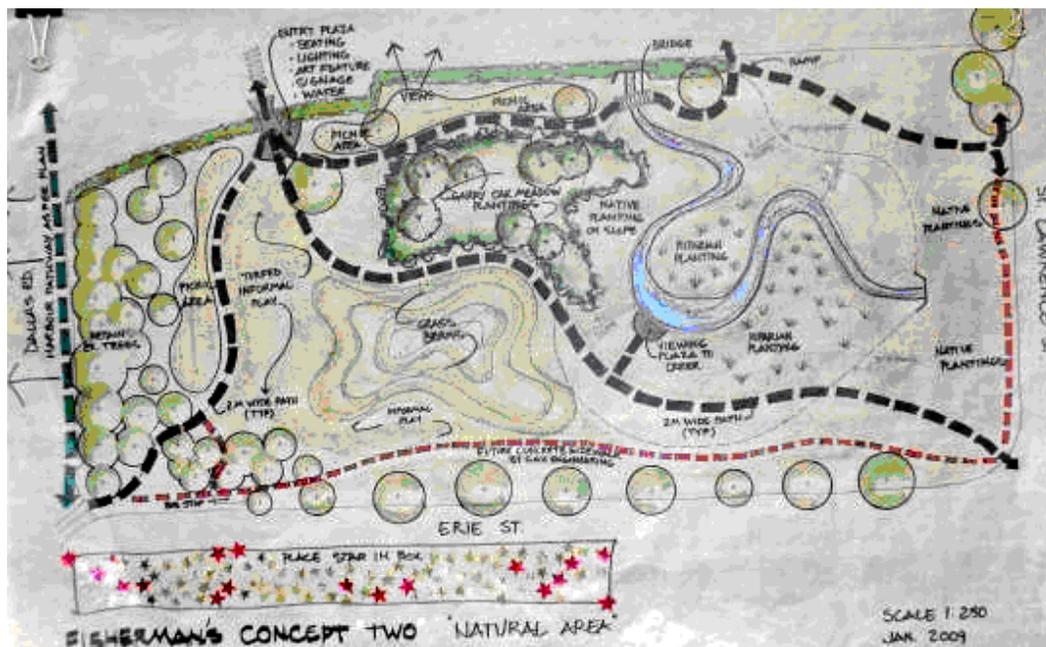


FIGURE 6: DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN

Budget and Implementation

Throughout the report some key tasks for future work were identified with regards to the stream development limiting the ability to accurately detail the stream costs. Therefore the budget and implementation phase will primarily focuses on the cost breakdown of the estimated design details for Phase 1 as shown in appendix 5.

PHASE 1

The current budget set for development of the park for phase 1 is \$400,000 for amenities and additional funding of \$140,000 is also identified in the Harbour Pathway budget for the portion of the Harbour Path that is within the park.

Implementation of Phase 1 will proceed as follows and is expected to be completed by spring of 2010;

- Detailed drawings and plans
- Site preparation and infrastructure development
- Installation of pathways, playground, plaza
- Creation/installation of natural areas and enhanced planting
- Placement of site furnishings and amenities
- Opening Ceremonies Spring of 2010

PHASE 2

Phase 2 of the project identifies the development of the stream and depending on the soil contamination levels the anticipated cost is between \$300,000 to \$1.2 million. From the amenities in phase 1 there is a surplus to help fund the planning for stream development as well as money to help attract matching grants for stream development. Funding for phase 2 can be completed in a number of ways.

- Council approves spending as a budget line item in upcoming budgets
- Project is completed as part of the new sustainable development budget in City
- Remaining monies used as leverage to attract government grants
- Grants obtained from nature advocacy and nature rehabilitation groups
- Donations received from community groups

The implementation of phase 2 will be completed by a consultant with experience in stream daylighting projects.

Operational Considerations

There will be an overall increase in the amount of maintenance required for this park. Horticulture activities will be the main focus of the maintenance program especially during the initial phases of development.

TURF

It would be expected that the reduction in mowing and field maintenance at Fisherman's Wharf will help reduce the annual turf maintenance costs. This may not be the case as the informal area will be irrigated resulting in more cutting cycles and the berms will require additional weed eating.

The mowing required for the stream area will be negligible and meadow in the east portion of the park will require periodic mowing similar to the natural areas in Beacon Hill Park.

IRRIGATION

Irrigation will have to be installed to maintain turf and shrub beds. It is anticipated that the irrigation will be zoned accordingly. If required the majority of irrigation on the east side of the park will be temporary to help establish the meadow.

INVASIVE SPECIES

The highest concentration of invasive species is the Himalayan blackberry bushes in the rocks along the north boundary. Due to the lack of suitable control measures for boulder walls emphasis will be to control and contain the blackberry to prevent it spreading into the park.

To ensure invasive species do not establish themselves within the creek special attention will have to be given to this area until native species are firmly established. Invasive species along creek banks are always a concern and are difficult to control because fluvial processes will transport many invasive species from the catchment areas upstream. Human and bird transport of seeds is also a concern. The creek area will be a high priority for invasive species management.

HORTICULTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Horticulture improvements in the park will include:

1. Natural Planting Zones
2. Enhanced Planting Zones
3. Mixed Planting Zones

The current park has one planting bed behind the ball diamond so there will be an increase in horticultural space to be maintained. Establishing the beds will require substantial additional work including irrigation; however, the amount of maintenance attention will decrease over time.

ARBORICULTURE

It is expected that net gain of 25–30 trees will be planted in the park and require watering by the irrigation system for the first five years. Approximately 15% of these trees will be coniferous. Ease of leaf pick-up should be considered when locating deciduous trees in areas where leaf pick up is necessary.

GARBAGE COLLECTION

The park currently serves as a picnic area and sports field and the number of garbage cans is expected to increase around the picnic and playground area. Overall six garbage cans will be required for a net increase of four. The garbage can should be located considering service requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Acknowledge an net increase of maintenance dollars required for Fisherman's Wharf park on the City's overall operations budget
- Acknowledge a significant increase in maintenance dollars for both horticulture staff and natural areas staff for the first 5 years of establishment

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Document Background Summary

2008 SOIL QUALITY ASSESSMENT

A soil quality assessment was performed at Fishermans Wharf Park by drilling 8 boreholes to assess the potential for soil contamination. The results of the analysis indicated that petroleum hydrocarbons (EPHs), volatile petroleum hydrocarbons (VPHs) volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were below the Contaminated Site Regulation (CSR) for residential land, commercial land, and Schedule 7 standards. The results from the metals analysis indicated that several metals including lead, zinc, barium and copper all exceeded the CSR limits in one or more locations in the Park.

2008 VICTORIA PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

The 2008 Victoria Pedestrian Master Plan ranked the portion of Erie Street and St. Lawrence Street that parallels the park boundary as it's highest priority for upgrades. This work will be completed by City of Victoria Engineering in 2009.

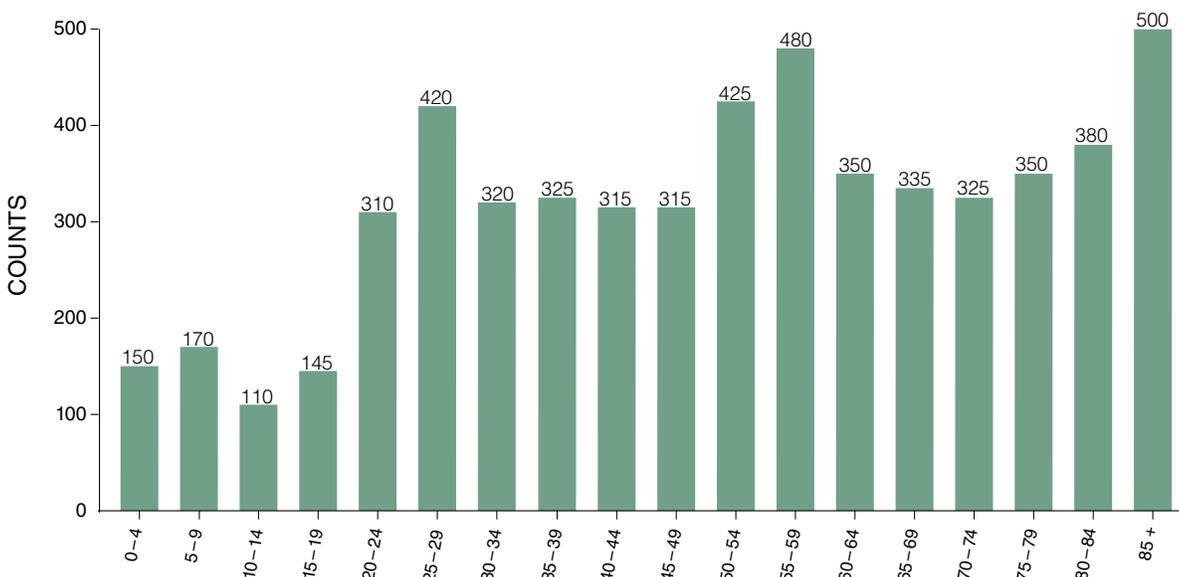
2007 CITY OF VICTORIA PARKS SURVEY

Inferences may be drawn from the City of Victoria Parks Survey because James Bay residents represented 16% of the respondents over 20 years old and 22% of the respondents in the youth category. This is the second only to the Fairfield neighbourhood in both categories for neighbourhood representation.

The survey determined that the highest character and amenity values were placed on local neighbourhood parks, natural parks and urban forest, access to water and beaches, as well as trails and pathways in parks. This was closely followed by greenway connections and boulevards and parks with quite passive areas. The lowest value was placed on tennis courts, public art, water features. Potential park amenities and facilities presented to youth received reasonable support but none stood out.

2006 STATISTICS CANADA AGE PROFILES

Fisherman's Wharf park fall into census tract 0003.02 and the following the graph outlines the demographic profile in 5 year increments.



2004 DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – SHOAL POINT, GREATER VICTORIA HARBOUR AUTHORITY AND CITY OF VICTORIA

In October 2003, council gave approval to the re-allocation of \$186,000 to be used towards the development and implementation of a master plan for Fisherman's Wharf Park and the adjacent publicly owned waterfront lands in partnership with the GVHA.

2003 – CITY OF VICTORIA GREENWAYS PLAN

The Greenways plan suggested a connection be provided to Fisherman Wharf Park to be accomplished with redevelopment, partnerships with senior governments, capital works and the Harbour Authority. The initiation date for this project is identified as 2010.

2002 SPORTS FIELD PERMITTING AND ALLOCATIONS FOR VICTORIA PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The key challenge facing the City is that the demand for sports fields exceeds the availability of suitable facilities, particularly during peak demands. However, the actual need for and use of sports fields is not fully known for a variety of reasons. Assessment of the actual need is complicated by the following:

- Reluctance of field users to reduce their request for field time or turn back unused field time within a season due to fears of not recovering the time should it be required in future seasons (due to historical use provisions in current policy)
- Practice of field users to apply for extra time on fields in several different municipalities as a 'hedge' against being shut out in one municipality

The report also ranked Fishermans Wharf field as a "B" field and suggested it under go a complete review in 2005.

1995 BICYCLE MASTERPLAN

The plan outlines Erie Street and St. Lawrence Street as bicycle pathways and suggests that signs be improved along these routes. Some improvements to the signs have been incorporated along the waterfront to aide cyclists and walkers travelling from James Bay to Downtown.

1993 JAMES BAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Fisherman Wharf Park falls in the sub-area defined as the tourist district in James Bay Neighborhood Plan. The City of Victoria recognizes that tourism plays a significant role in the neighborhood and the popular Fisherman's Wharf, managed by the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, is directly adjacent to the park site. It should be noted that the park on the northwest boundary borders industrial and residential areas.

An important recommendation from the James Bay Neighbourhood Plan is to "ensure Fisherman's Wharf Park is "reserved" as a neighbourhood park with a small area set aside for the regional walking park." Other recommendations include enhancing and preserving the waterfront under City of Victoria jurisdiction. This plan also outlines conditions to maintain, expand, and improve access for pedestrians and bicyclists in a number of areas.

APPENDIX 2: Open House 1 Amenity Ranking

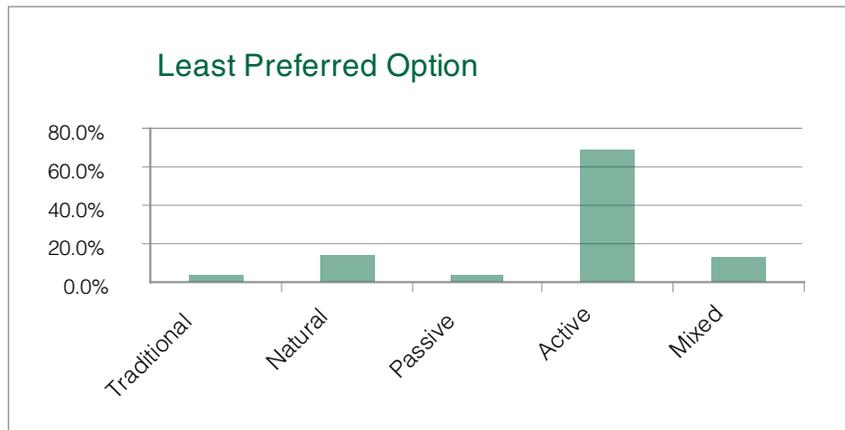
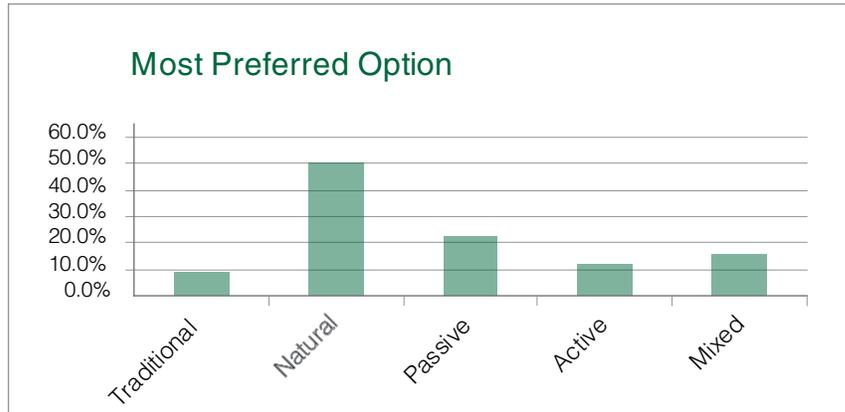
During Open House 1, respondents were asked what value they place on the following list of park amenities and to rank them using a Likert scale of 4. With 1 being “high value” and 4 representing “no opinion”

The following is the list of amenities ranked from highest to lowest value.

AMENITIES LIST

- natural features native plantings
- walking
- random seating
- gathering
- stream
- picnic
- washrooms
- landscape gardens
- soccer
- public art
- playground
- interpretation features
- farmers market
- leash optional area
- ball diamond
- Fitness circuit
- viewing deck
- basketball court
- bocce ball court
- labyrinth
- spray park
- tennis

APPENDIX 3: Open House 2 Preferred Options



APPENDIX 4: Recommendation Summary

STREAM DAYLIGHTING AND DESIGN

- Stream daylighting be developed in phases in accordance with approved budgets and other funding sources
- Retain consulting services to determine the soil contamination levels and associated remediation costs
- Retain a consultant to develop detailed stream channel design and modeling scenarios
- Work with GVHA to promote inter-tidal fish friendly culvert or bridge connecting Fisherman's Wharf Park to Heron Cove
- Implement an art project reflecting stream values in the event costs or technical issues delay the daylighted stream project beyond 2012
- Daylighting of stream be re-visited with the community in 2015 if sufficient funding is not available in the coming years

PLANTING ZONES

- Establish a variety of planting zones
- Dispersed native planting zones be the primary feature of the park
- Irrigation be provided to ensure successful plant establishment
- Provide opportunities for interpretation and education opportunities
- Use plantings to protect the stream banks, reduce soil erosion and provide barriers to limit stream access where required
- Replace invasive species with natural plantings
- Develop a control and contain strategy for the blackberries on the north rock wall
- Maintain current trees in park but prune as required with the exception of the plums and cherries which can be phased out over time
- Remove trees that have been identified as a safety hazard
- Develop Gary-oak meadow grasses and wildflowers in the parks nursery

PATHWAYS

- Construct a 5m Harbour Pathway in the Park connecting the Dallas Road Erie Street intersection to the north stairs with low-level lighting
- Construct a 3m Harbour Pathway in the Park connecting the north stairs to proposed Heron Cove Bridge crossing connection in the GVHA parking lot
- Create a pathway system in the park providing a 500m loop
- Create a pathway providing access to stream banks for interaction and learning opportunities
- Develop the sidewalk to meander along Erie Street and St. Lawrence Street

SEATING AND GATHERING SPACES

- Evaluate existing condition of benches in park and replace as required
- Establish a variety of seating areas and furnishings throughout the park with emphasis on blending into the natural features of the park
- Expand the memorial bench guidelines to include natural furnishings for use in Fisherman's Wharf park and elsewhere in the City of Victoria

PICNICKING

- Develop a picnic area amongst the trees along the west boundary with a higher ratio of tables placed at the north end of this area
- Conduct tree pruning and a higher level of maintenance to this area
- Assess the existing trees for health and safety and remove as required
- Ensure a tree line is maintained through succession along the west edge and throughout the area

PLAZAS

- Develop a small plaza at the junction of the Harbour Pathway

INFORMAL PLAY AREA AND EVENT SPACE

- Create a functional open turf area to provide opportunities for informal play and community events

VIEWING AREAS

- Construct viewing areas along the north edge of the park considering intimacy and comfort
- Provide viewing nodes that focus on the stream and other newly created viewsapes

PLAYGROUND

- Construct a play area based on natural components and playscapes
- Consider designing a Fisherman's theme into the play elements
- Construct the play area close to the picnicking in the Northwest portion of the park
- Encourage interaction with the natural environment of the park

WASHROOMS

- Construction of a permanent washroom building not be undertaken as part of this plan
- Encourage use of temporary washrooms for programs of during large public events

SPORTS FIELD

- Decommission existing sport field and cancel associated permits
- Identify opportunities for increased permitted soccer use in other areas in the City in the 2009 Parks Master plan
- Consult softball groups and evaluate the need for additional softball space

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Acknowledge an net increase of maintenance dollars required for Fisherman's Wharf park on the City's overall operations budget
- Acknowledge a significant increase in maintenance dollars for both horticulture staff and natural areas staff for the first 5 years of establishment

APPENDIX 5: Budget and Implementation

Project	Sub Project	Budget Estimates	Summer 2009	Fall 2009	Winter 2009/10	Spring 2010	Phase
Stream	soil analysis	\$30,000					
	design	\$50,000					
	construction	\$300000–1.2 million					2
Pathways							
(funding from Harbour Pathway)	harbour pathway	\$50,000					
	gravel pathways	\$30,000					
	bridge	\$40,000					2
	lighting	\$30,000					
Subtotal		\$150,000					
Planting Zones	meadow and gardens	\$25,000					
	enhanced zones	\$25,000					
	Irrigation	\$20,000					
Subtotal		\$70,000					
Seating	memorial benches						
	benches	\$20,000					
	tables and chairs	\$10,000					
Subtotal		\$30,000					
Picnicking	water	\$8,000					
	bench improvements	\$8,000					
	tree improvements	\$10,000					
Subtotal		\$26,000					
Plaza	surface	\$25,000					
	amenities	\$20,000					
Sub total		\$45,000					
Viewing Areas	amenities	\$10,000					
Subtotal		\$10,000					
Playground	equipment	\$100,000					
	extras	\$20,000					
Subtotal		\$120,000					
Stream Budget		\$300,000–1.2					
Harbour Pathway Budget		\$150,000					
Fisherman's Wharf Budget		\$300,000					
Total Budget Range		\$750,000–1.2 million					



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