

8. PARKS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

ISSUES

How best, where and in what amount and configuration should parks and other public open spaces be provided to serve the residents, workers and visitors of the Coal Harbour community?

What kind of park spaces are suitable in the heart of the city -- many small 'breathing' spaces; a major civic space; primarily neighbourhood parks to serve locals; or green spaces as part of grand boulevard treatments and pedestrian parkway systems? Should at least one significantly sized park space be required?

Should required parks' standards for Coal Harbour be the same as for those of other nearby inner-city residential communities including the West End, False Creek South, and Pacific Place, or should they be different?

Given the adjacency of the westerly part of Coal Harbour to the large expanse of Devonian and Stanley Parks, should additional neighbourhood park space be required on the Bayshore site? Alternatively, should a pay-in-lieu option be considered instead, which could be used to upgrade facilities in nearby parks, or provide more parks nearby?

Should special attention to art and monuments in public open spaces be a priority in this inner-city, waterfront setting?

Should major parks be provided up front or in tandem with phased development?

Park space downtown is generally felt to be deficient for workers' needs. To what extent should the Coal Harbour area contribute to these open space needs of downtown workers?

FACTS

In this document, neighbourhood park space refers to land dedicated to and under the care and custody of the Park Board but excludes waterfront walkways and other regional park spaces. Public open space refers to open-air amenity space that is easily and clearly accessible to the public for 24 hours of the day, including enclosed atrium spaces.

The existing average provision of neighbourhood park space in the city is 2.75 acres/1000 population. The overall provision of all park space, excluding golf courses, in the city is 6.18 acres/1000 population.

The provision of neighbourhood park space for South False Creek and Fairview Slopes residents is about 3.0 acres/1000 population. The provision in the West End is about 3.0 acres/1000 population, based on the inclusion of 95 acres of Stanley Park and English Bay beaches. The provision in the Downtown Eastside is about 2.0 acres/1,000 population.

A residential population range for the Coal Harbour area has been discussed varying from about 3000 to 5000 people, depending on the overall residential density approved. For the Marathon site, based upon revised residential population projections of 3,500 people maximum and assuming neighbourhood park provision of 2.75 acres/1000 population in addition to a 25 foot wide shoreline walkway, approximately 9.6 acres of

useable public neighbourhood parks would be needed in addition to plazas and other private and semi-public open spaces associated with development. For the Bayshore site, based on preliminary population projections of 1500 people maximum and the same assumptions, about 4.1 acres of useable public neighbourhood parks would be needed.

Except for Stanley Park, West End parks, and Downtown Eastside parks, there are only 5 publicly-owned or dedicated parks or open spaces associated with the downtown area (not including plazas). These are: Portal Park 0.3 acres; Discovery Square 0.3 acres; Cathedral Square 0.6 acres; Victory Square 1.0 acres; and Robson/Courthouse Square 2.8 acres. This totals approximately 5.0 acres of public downtown parks and open space.

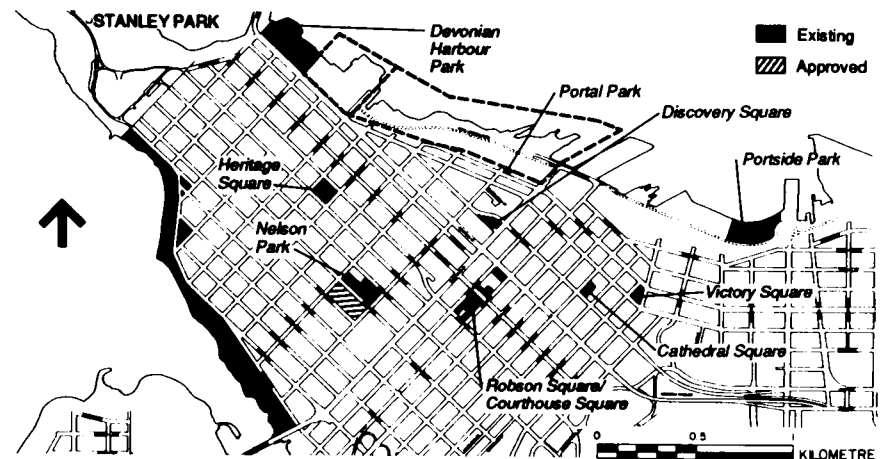


Figure 11. Downtown Peninsula Parks and Major Public Open Space

PAST POLICY

1979 CWD ODP:

- Major public open space should be provided at locations in close proximity to the intended primary pedestrian access points to the Central Waterfront (e.g. Cardero, Bute, Burrard).
- Approximately 16 acres of public open space should be provided in the Coal Harbour portion of the CWD (based on site size of Sub-areas 1 and 2).
- Each new development should strive to provide publicly-accessible open space equivalent to at least 40 percent of the development area.
- Different types of open space to include public pedestrian walkway at water's edge, pedestrian circulation systems, and a variety of public places for active and passive recreational uses.

POLICY

Ensure that parks and other public open spaces of the highest quality are an integral part of the Coal Harbour community, and that they are treated to enhance and reinforce the marine character of the Coal Harbour waterfront. The major park space should be at the water's edge, and its sense of publicness should be enhanced by establishing strong visual and pedestrian connections between adjacent access streets and the waterfront.

Provide parks and other public open space of a size, location and configuration to meet the needs of residents and workers; that provide attractions for visitors in ways which are compatible with local residential and commercial environments; and that take full advantage of the waterfront setting.

Select land which, in location and design potential is suitable for parks and open space use, not because it is unsuitable for development.

In size and configuration, neighbourhood parks should accommodate both active and passive activity and be capable of modification to meet changes in community recreation needs. Park and open space design should differentiate areas used mostly by local residents from those used regularly by outsiders.

Locate some parks to enhance and reinforce access opportunities from the existing city.

Ensure that private and semi-public open spaces are sufficient in size and configuration to provide adequate spaces between buildings, adequate play spaces, and adequate circulation. Dedicated park space should not generally be depended upon to satisfy these needs nor should these spaces generally be considered in fulfilling neighbourhood park requirements.

Maximize sun exposure on public parks and open spaces particularly during high-use periods.

Ensure that the development of parks and public open space occurs concurrently with the residential development which they are intended to serve, except to the extent that it is considered to be in the public interest for phasing.

Neighbourhood parks should meet minimum size criteria and preferably be located at natural grade, but if located on top of structured parking on account of the new sloping grade proposed for the site, then City ownership will be required of the land on which the park is constructed. Parking structures with parks on top should be designed to accommodate full landscaping of the park space, including the planting of large trees.

Encourage the provision and integration of public art into the design of parks and public open spaces. Ensure that these art features are of a quality and character that is appropriate to this high profile waterfront location.

For the Bayshore site, develop the foot of Cardero Street as a street-end park, integrated with the Marathon site to the east.

With respect to park size, function, and location, many options are possible. The following outlines a concept that would achieve a number of objectives including meeting neighbourhood park space requirements, providing a variety of smaller park spaces, and creating a major civic shoreline park to respond to downtown workers' and visitors' needs.

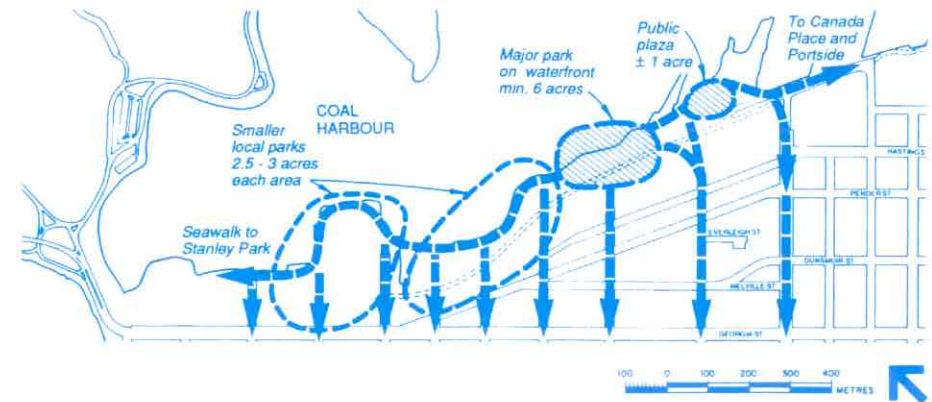


Figure 12. Coal Harbour Parks and Open Space Concept

SPECIFIC TARGETS

Neighbourhood park space should be provided at a minimum of 2.75 acres/1,000 resident population in addition to the waterfront walkway. Park requirements for the rental housing incentive will be provided, but will also be used for density calculation purposes.

For the Coal Harbour area, at least 22 acres of parks and other public open spaces (e.g. plazas, viewpoints and amphitheatres) including the waterfront walkway should be provided. Of this total, at least 6 acres should be provided on the Bayshore site, and 16 acres should be provided on the Marathon site. A major waterfront park should be provided on the Marathon site of at least 6 acres in size.

Measured at the equinox noon period, at least 50 percent of the seawalk and major public park and open space areas should be in sun.

For the Coal Harbour escarpment sites where adequate neighbourhood park provision is not feasible because of their small size, consider the application of a payment-in-lieu option to provide for these needs of the residential development.

For the Bayshore site neighbourhood park provision, consider the application of a payment-in-lieu option to provide for these needs of the residential development, should it prove feasible or be in the public interest to upgrade facilities or acquire additional park space on nearby sites.