Greetings Mayor and Council-
Please find attached a public statement from BC Hydro regarding their proposal for substations under our parks.
As you can see, they have decided not to proceed with this approach based on the time constraints and valuation issues.
Best
Sadhu

Sadhu Aufochs Johnston | City Manager
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From: McDonald, Jessica [mailto:Jessica.McDonald@bchydro.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 09, 2017 12:41 PM
To: Johnston, Sadhu
Subject: Seed

Sadhu, please find below our public statement. As I said, we will continue to look for ideas as we make new decisions and hope there are opportunities to work together in the future.
Thanks, Jessica

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Jessica McDonald | President & CEO
BC Hydro
Smart about power in all we do.

Website  bchydro.com
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Today, BC Hydro President and CEO Jessica McDonald released the following statement:
In January, BC Hydro introduced seed: an innovative idea to meet the electricity needs of Vancouver’s growing population and make better use of land downtown by building two new substations underground. Our idea would have made the substations virtually invisible and leaves available land for important things like schools, parks and housing, while investing millions of dollars into public benefits instead of solely on the purchase of land.

Working with the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver School Board, it was exciting to see the possibilities take shape — a new school in Coal Harbour by 2020, a new school and daycare spaces in the West End by 2025, a refresh of Cathedral Square Park and a refresh of Emery Barnes Park in 20 years along with millions to invest in new park and recreation facilities — all while ensuring reliable, clean power supply.

Over the past two months, we consulted the public about their early thoughts about seed, holding four public open houses, four roundtable meetings, two meetings with Parent Advisory Councils and giving several talks and presentations to approximately 400 people. We received 219 feedback forms and 27 written submissions, with the majority of consultation participants indicating they think seed is a better idea than our traditional approach of building above ground substations.

We recently learned that, in exchange for the rights to build a substation underneath Emery Barnes Park, similar to our existing substation lease at Cathedral Square, the City of Vancouver has asked BC Hydro to pay a price based on what it would cost to purchase the land outright. This shift makes the extra costs of building underground prohibitive. We also learned that the City will not be making a decision about whether or not seed could move forward for many more months. While we respect their processes and views in reaching this decision, this means that our proposal is no longer possible.

We always knew the timelines and partnerships required to make this idea work were ambitious — but at a time when land is scarce and new community facilities and amenities are needed, we knew we owed it to the residents of Vancouver to explore new public partnerships to make better use of available land and enable a more efficient use of public funds.

I want to thank the Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver School Board and the City of Vancouver for the time they took to consider this proposal, as well as the hundreds of downtown Vancouver residents who attended our roundtable meetings and open houses and provided feedback online.

This concept has shown the creative thinking and innovative ideas that take place within BC Hydro each and every day. While we’re disappointed, we will keep listening and looking for ideas as we make new decisions on above ground substation options in the downtown core to support the growing demand for energy in Vancouver.