

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

NORTHEAST FALSE CREEK PARK DESIGN

JUNE 2018



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A close-up photograph of a cedar tree trunk, showing the intricate, layered texture of its bark. The bark is a rich, dark brown color with lighter, fibrous layers visible. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a forest setting.

1 INTRODUCTION

Cedar (Credit: Lisa Walker)





UNIQUE NEW AND RENEWED PARKS

Northeast False Creek will have a major destination park which will connect new and existing neighbourhoods to the downtown and False Creek. Located at the edge of Vancouver downtown core, Northeast False Creek Park is surrounded by Chinatown and will be fronting the new events and entertainment district. This large public space includes the new and renewed Creekside Park on the waterfront, the revitalized Andy Livingstone Park and the renewed Downtown Skateboard Plaza. It will be a unique public space for all Vancouverites to connect with nature, play, meet, gather and celebrate.

REPORT INTENT

This report summarizes key input gathered from the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous community from the start of the Northeast False Creek Park Design in the fall of 2016 to February 2018, with a focus on the work undertaken since July 2017 as part of the extended engagement with the local First Nations. The result of the engagement with park stakeholders will be the object of a future report.

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2 TRUTH & RECONCILIATION FRAMEWORK

Thunderbird 2017 (Credit: Pablo Cesar Palma)

2.1 MUSQUEAM, SQUAMISH AND TSLEIL-WAUTUTH TERRITORY

Vancouver is situated on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. The area currently known as Northeast False Creek is of significant meaning to the local First Nations who stewarded the land since time immemorial. Each Nation had their own relationship to the area, including their own names and use for the lands and resources.

Vancouver is also home to urban Indigenous people. The term urban Indigenous peoples refers primarily to First Nations, Métis and Inuit from across Canada currently residing in urban areas. In 2011, Vancouver had the third largest Indigenous population of any city in Canada.

The following information about the local First Nations are excerpts from their respective websites.





MUSQUEAM
(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm)

We are traditional hən'q'əmin'əm' speaking people and have descended from the cultural group known as the Coast Salish. Our people moved throughout our traditional territory for thousands of years using the resources the land provided for fishing, hunting, trapping and gathering, to maintain their livelihood. Today, we still use these resources for economical and traditional purpose. Although a metropolitan city has developed in the heart of Musqueam territory, our community maintains strong cultural and traditional beliefs. Our community historians and educators teach and pass on our history to our people, which has always been the way of our people, to keep our culture and traditions strong. Today our population flourishes and we are a strong community of over thousand members. We live on a very small portion of our traditional territory, known as the Musqueam Indian Reserve, located south of Marine Drive near the mouth of the Fraser River.



SQUAMISH
(Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw)

The Squamish Nation is comprised of descendants of the Coast Salish Aboriginal peoples who lived in the present day Greater Vancouver area; Gibson's landing and Squamish River watershed. The Squamish Nation is a vibrant and dynamic Coast Salish Nation, with a strong culture, rich history and bright future. The Squamish nation has existed and prospered within our traditional territory since time immemorial. We are Coast Salish people. Our language is the Squamish language. Our society is, and always has been organized and sophisticated, with complex laws and rules governing all forms of social relations, economic rights and relations with other First Nations. We have never ceded or surrendered title to our lands, rights to our resources of the power to make decisions within our territory.



TSLEIL-WAUTHUTH
(mi ce:p kʷətɬwɪləm)

We are the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, "People of the Inlet." According to archaeological evidence and our oral history, Tsleil-Waututh people have lived in this traditional territory for thousands of years. Burrard Inlet sustains us with food, a place to live, spectacular natural beauty. Our ancestors traveled throughout the territory, keeping villages in different locations to live wherever seasonal resources were plentiful. Our lands and waters have shaped our culture and will be central to our way of life for generations to come. We will continue to put the face of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation back on our traditional territory, build capacity within our community, and participate on all levels, social, ecological, cultural, economic, in decision making within our lands.

2.2 CITY OF RECONCILIATION

2.2 CITY OF RECONCILIATION

The City of Vancouver is in an era of reconciliation. On July 9, 2014, City Council adopted a framework for and designated Vancouver as a City of Reconciliation. The designation and commitment followed the Year of Reconciliation in Vancouver from June 2013 to June 2014. The first four years of the City of Reconciliation focus on how non Indigenous peoples can better understand the historical and contemporary issues Indigenous people face daily. The future of the City of Reconciliation is to begin strengthening relations through a reconciliation lens with other cultural communities.

The framework for City of Reconciliation has three foundational components that further strengthen our services and ongoing relationships with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and Urban Indigenous communities:

- Cultural competency
- Strengthening relations
- Effective decision-making



Community Members Working on Regalia for the Songs for Reconciliation Project (Credit: Brian Lye)

2.3 TRUTH-TELLING: INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

In 2017, the Park Board approved funding for an Indigenous/Non-Indigenous collaborative art project. In a paradigm-shifting move, staff decided to first consult with First Nations artists and cultural leaders to ask how staff have been perpetuating colonialism through previous artistic grant and selection processes.

The resulting feedback was summarized in the Truth-Telling: Indigenous perspectives Report by Kamala Todd. It was much broader-reaching, and tells of their experiences working with staff in all departments. It is fierce and unblinking; but underlying it all is the inestimable kindness and compassion of First Nations people to work with staff. The sessions themselves were difficult but very supportive of all participants, Park Board staff included.



2.4 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Reconciliation refers to the process to renew relationships between settlers and Indigenous people, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership. Reconciliation is an emotionally charged and on-going journey with the goal of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to *“exist together without being opposed to each other”* (Oxford dictionary).

The City and Park Board are committed to seeking ways to further their reconciliation efforts and to strengthen their relations with both local First Nations and Urban Indigenous peoples. Northeast False Creek’s central location within the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and proximity to significant Urban Indigenous communities presents an unprecedented and unique opportunity to manifest reconciliation efforts in a major waterfront park.

Key excerpts from the Truth-Telling Report express the nuances and the essence of the reconciliation work:

Trust has to be **established**.

For many people, we are just at the **“truth telling”** phase of Truth and Reconciliation. With our country’s history of colonialism, **we have never been ‘conciled’**. (...) As some people noted, not everyone is ready to reconcile.

How can artists have a **voice on the urban landscape** without having to **ask permission from colonial institutions**, and without being labelled “protestors”?

It’s now time for the rest of the society to **“open their minds”** and create **fundamental shifts in the “old world view of privilege”**.

There is a need for **non-Indigenous people to listen, to step aside** and support Indigenous people in genuine ways

People pointed to **“systemic oppression”** and **“acts of “exclusion”** which have resulted in Indigenous people being viewed as “non-participants” in Canadian society, and as a result they were **never considered in city plans**.

Because Vancouver has such a **diverse, multicultural population**, it is essential that the **local First Nations are clear and visible within the fabric of the city** so that when other people’s artworks and cultures are displayed, **they don’t erase or overwrite Indigenous people**.



3 PARK DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Thunderbird 2017 (Credit: Pablo Cesar Palma)

3.1 DRAFT PARK CONCEPT DESIGN

The park design process started in fall of 2016 with the definition of the principles that guided the park design. The three themes were community, nature and destination. The draft park concept, released in June 2017, generated a high level of interest from a wide group of stakeholders with over 5,000 people engaged to date. Highlights of the feedback on the draft park concept design are:

- Meaningfully engage with the local First Nations
- Bigger waterfront park
- Design to be bolder, more unique and authentic design rooted in Vancouver
- Support for nature, wildlife and habitat
- Support and concerns for large events in the park
- Recognize rich cultural heritage of the area
- Define the big moves and be aware of fragmented spaces

We, the park project team, are composed of staff and the lead landscape architecture consultant, James Corner Field Operation. Within this original process, we engaged with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations as part of regular government to government meetings. With this first step, we introduced the project and its context, and received preliminary feedback on the draft park concept design.



Draft Park Concept Design for Northeast False Creek June 2017

3.2 PARADIGM SHIFT

Building on this feedback and as part of the City of Reconciliation, senior management decided to extend the consultation stage on the draft park concept design to take the time to engage with the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous community in a deep and open way. In the summer 2017, the City and the Park Board dedicated staff, including Indigenous staff, to form a Northeast False Creek Indigenous engagement working group. This group prepared the Indigenous engagement framework and stewarded more in-depth conversations with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous people on the draft park concept design.

The focus of the engagement is on ensuring that the Indigenous principles of cultural practice, ecological stewardship, and Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh visibility on their own lands are reflected in the revised park concept design. This approach goes beyond integrating elements of the local First Nations culture; this new perspective roots the design of the park in Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh's values and principles.

This extended consultation phase also gave us the opportunity to further the dialogue with park stakeholders and cultural communities. We will continue to work this year with the local First Nations and stakeholders to express the feedback received in a revised concept design. We anticipate sharing the design directions of the revised concept design late 2018 and bring it to the Park Board for consideration early 2019, subject to conversations with local First Nations and stakeholders.



3.3

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The overall engagement objectives with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and Urban Indigenous communities are to:

- Ensure authentic and ongoing conversations about park design and stewardship
- Effectively document and transparently demonstrate learnings as they are established
- Ensure emerging Indigenous design principles are incorporated in the process:
 - Traditional Values
 - Cultural Practice
 - Visibility on the land
- Visibly and effectively weave the input received into the planning and design process - this includes transparency and explaining why feedback was not incorporated if not reflected in design
- Capitalize on a significant and large scale opportunity to demonstrate the City's commitment to reconciliation
- Learn from the expertise the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and Urban Indigenous peoples



A close-up photograph of tree bark, showing a small, brown, segmented insect-like creature clinging to a vertical crevice. The bark is dark and textured, with some lighter, moss-like patches. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures and the insect.

4 WHAT WE DID

Tree Close Up (Credit: Lisa Walker)



People Amongst the People - Susan A. Point

(Credit: Lisa Walker)

4.1 OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

LEADING TO THE DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN

Between the fall 2016 and spring 2017, the Northeast False Creek project office met six times with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and Urban Indigenous Peoples’ Advisory Committee (UIPAC). We presented the overall Northeast False Creek project with an emphasis on the draft concept plan for the park.

LEADING TO THE DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN

EVENT	DATE
City-MST Annual Planning Workshop	March 10, 2017
MST Quarterly Meeting	May 4, 2017
Urban Indigenous People’s Advisory Committee Monthly Meeting	Dec. 1, 2016 May 15, 2017
Urban Indigenous People’s Advisory Committee Workshop	June 8, 2017
Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh representative Workshop	June 9, 2017



Shore to Shore - Ts'uts'umutl Luke Marsto
(Credit: Lisa Walker)

4.1

EXTENDED ENGAGEMENT ON THE DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN

Between July 2017 and February 2018, we met regularly with the Indigenous engagement working group, and engaged at key times with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations to deepen our understanding of Indigenous design principles.

EXTENDED ENGAGEMENT ON THE DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN

EVENT	DATE
Indigenous Engagement Working Group meetings	August 2017-February 2018
MST Quarterly Meetings	Sept. 26, 2017 Feb. 14, 2018
Musqueam Open House	October 10, 2017
NEFC Area Plan Open House	November 18-22, 2017
Cedar Rose Day	November 29, 2017

NEXT STEPS

We will continue to work with the Indigenous engagement working group, and the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations and urban Indigenous people to express the feedback received in a revised park design. .



4.2 DESCRIPTION OF KEY STEPS & EVENTS

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

The group met regularly to review the engagement framework, plan and debrief about events, and discuss findings. This collaboration between City and Park Board staff was invaluable to gather and share individual understandings from the Northeast False Creek process underway including the Stanley Park Intergovernmental Working Group and the Britannia center Renewal. This group prepared and implemented the Indigenous Engagement Framework.

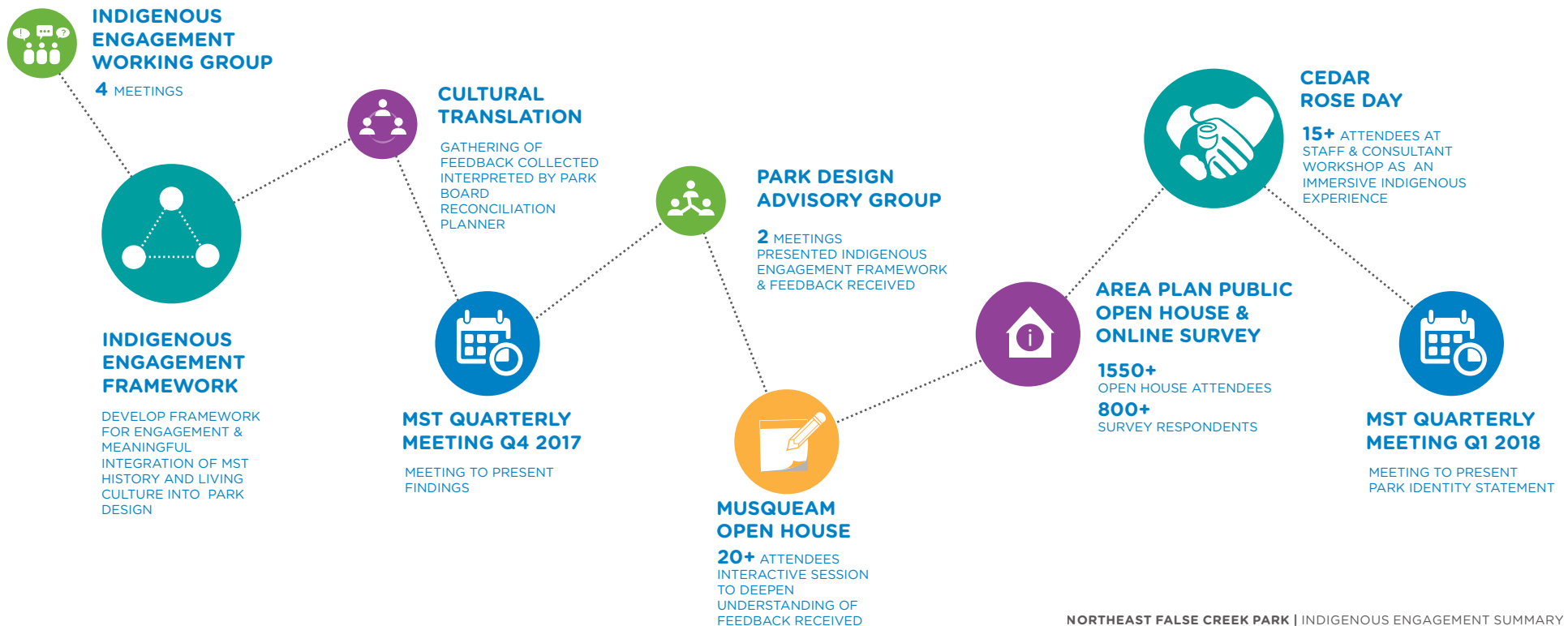
CULTURAL TRANSLATION

The first step of the framework was to analyze the feedback collected to date on the park design and through related parallel planning processes. The project team received valuable feedback on the draft concept design through meetings with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, and urban Indigenous community prior to the extended consultation phase. Ensuring the proper meaning of the input received was key to establish a solid foundation for further engagement. It also identified gaps in information.

MST QUARTERLY MEETINGS

At the quarterly meeting in September 2017 the project team presented the Indigenous engagement framework and the findings to validate what had been heard as well as fill any gaps in information.

At the quarterly meeting in February 2018 the project team shared a draft park identity statement for comment and received further input regarding the cultural importance of this part of the city.



4.2



MUSQUEAM OPEN HOUSE

On October 10, 2017, staff talked to the Musqueam community about Northeast False Creek Area Planning and Park Design process. This fun and interactive drop-in session was designed to help deepen the project teams understanding of the key feedback received to date to shape the look, feel and design of these projects. Over 20 community members attended the session to learn about the project, provide insights and responses to key questions

Although we offered to host a similar workshop for the Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, a time and day has yet to be set. The Tsleil-Waututh Nation has recently showed interest to have a design workshop with their technical team and cultural advisors in the spring 2018.



Musqueam Open House



THEMES

Several questions on the following themes were asked:

ACTIVITIES AT THE WATERFRONT

- What cultural activities would happen at the water's edge?
- What activities at the waterfront would be the most important to you?
- If there was a boathouse in NEFC, what would happen there?
- If there was a dock, what would indicate it was an indigenous canoe landing?

HARVEST GARDEN

- What type of harvestable would you like to see planted here
- If the garden was to be planted in a shape recognizable from above, what would be an appropriate image?
- Does the harvest garden need to be located with/next to the gathering space?

YOUTH

- What type of park spaces would be welcoming for youth?
- What type of activities would promote inter-generational engagement in the park?

GATHERING SPACE

- What activities could happen in the gathering space?
- What time of the day/year would these activities happen?
- How can we signify that the park is a space for Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous Community?
- How important is direct access from gathering space to the waterfront? What would you consider direct access?

4.2

CEDAR ROSE DAY

A staff and designers retreat was held in November 2017 in Stanley Park, the heart of the iconic western coastal forest cultivated by the local First Nations for millennia. This event was an opportunity to ask difficult questions, understand and deconstruct colonial thinking, and explore Indigenous approaches to the park design. It was a day of immersion in West Coast culture, with learning how to make roses from cedar bark and sharing of deeply personal stories in the company of Elders and children. Through it, the participants understood that we all have different Indigenous roots, yet are all united in the need to replenish from our busy lives.



Cedar Rose Day (Credit: James Tenyenhuis)



Cedar Roses (Credit: Rena Soutar)



4.3

KEY THEMES & INDIGENOUS PRINCIPLES

VISIBILITY

The park identity should be rooted in the local Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and their connection to their ancestral land and water.

A WELCOMING SPACE

Creating a sense of belonging must go beyond “everyone is welcome”. If a space is not built with that user group in mind, they will not feel welcome. There are no “culturally neutral” places; they are often designed for the dominant culture but not necessarily representing anyone’s own culture. Building for an Indigenous presence is not contrary to anyone’s experience. An Indigenous space is by its very definition a welcoming space. It is a nurturing space that allows for culture to be shared.

Promoting inter-generational activities, bringing together Elders and youth is another important Indigenous design principle. Design to welcome youth with playful elements such as large swings or slides.



Songs for Reconciliation Project (Credit: Brian Lye)

4.3

ORIENTED TO THE WATERFRONT

There is a profound tie to the water that is expressed through the orientation of the coastal villages to the waterfront. This profound tie to water should be reflected in the design of the gathering space. This physical and spiritual connection is a key Indigenous design principle.

Cultural activities that could happen there include, but are not limited to, official ceremony, canoeing and fishing.

A PLACE TO GATHER

Accessing a place by canoe and celebrating at the water's edge are two key principles in Indigenous culture. The shoreline is a celebratory space that generates enthusiasm and should accommodate and welcome highly respected dignitaries.

Structures are typically single pitched roof on the Coast Salish villages.

For gathering, it is important to sit in a place that feels nurturing and safe with back protected and that is oriented towards the water.

Consideration should be brought to accommodate logistics for cultural ceremonies and events such as potlatch and ceremonial dancing.



Thunderbird 2017 (Credit: Pablo Cesar Palma)

4.3

A PLACE TO HEAL

The expression of culture is innately tied to health, wellness, and spiritual and personal healing. This should be recognized in the gathering space, which should be designed to house activities that support cultural practice and expression.

Leadership is based on the ability to take care of others. Wellness is tied to the ability to express culture. Nourish ourselves and our communities through cultural expression are key in Indigenous culture.

A PLACE TO LEARN FROM

The park can be not only a place for Indigenous people to practice their living culture but also to learn from Indigenous cultures and reflect on individual culture.

There is a tendency to rely on Western or dominant culture “experts” to solve problems. The park is an opportunity to learn from the expertise of Indigenous models of stewardship. This can create and stimulate meaningful dialogue and relationships.

Wherever possible, the project and design team would like to explore further the stories related to Northeast False Creek with the knowledge holders and Elders.



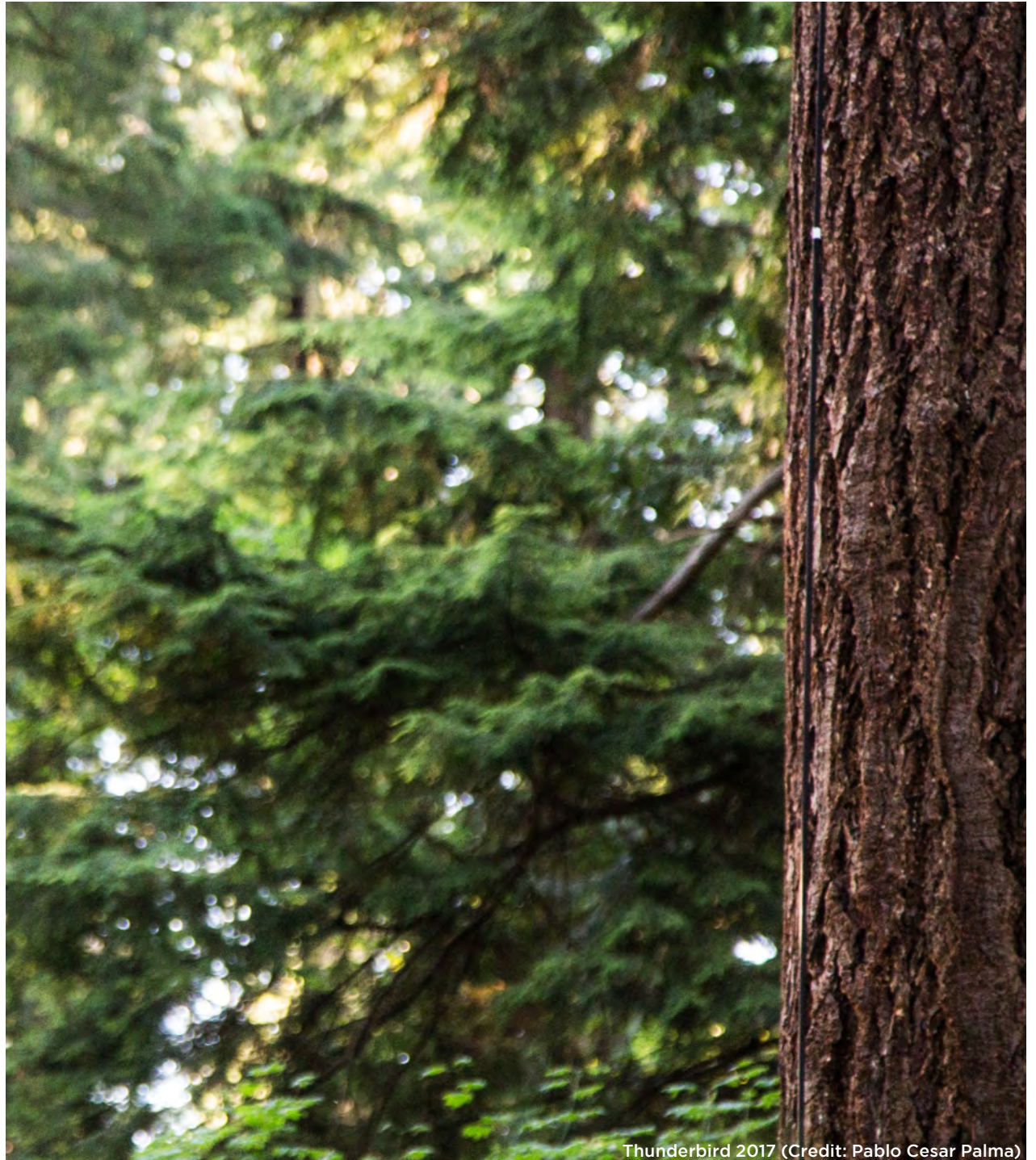
Talking Stick (Credit: Ergun Calisgan)

4.3

HARVEST GARDENS

Indigenous gardens consist of harvestable plants and trees that are arranged in an organic manner, evoking wilderness conditions. The plants are used for cooking or preparing medicine. The Indigenous landscape is stewarded and cultivated but not segregated like most western gardens. This means an Indigenous approach to planting, which includes native and introduced plants, suitable for a specific place; not installing only native plants from the local ecosystem.

Before colonization, False Creek was an ecologically rich area, with wildlife and vibrant aquatic life, and connected to Burrard Inlet.



Thunderbird 2017 (Credit: Pablo Cesar Palma)

4.4 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ADVISORY'S COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Specific input from the Urban Indigenous People Advisory Committee and urban Indigenous community was received on the draft concept design as well as resulting from previous related planning processes in the city.

GATHERING SPACE

A desire to have a designated space for events with dancing, singing and eating is a recurrent theme. The size of that space should be big enough to host National Indigenous People's Day. The idea of having a Long house, including indoor with fire for cooking, as well as an outdoor covered space was brought forward as an important facility for the community. A permanent youth structure would also be beneficial.

WATERFRONT

Waterfront is also an important theme for the urban Indigenous community. It includes canoe access and opportunity for a clam garden on the shore.

PLANTING

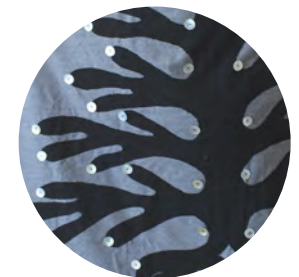
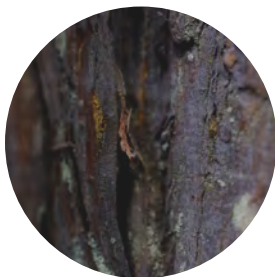
Growing Indigenous edible plants that provide a food source is another recurrent theme. The project team learned the many uses of cedar in the Indigenous culture; its roots and bark have many uses.

SPECIFIC DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

The Urban Indigenous People Advisory Committee encouraged the project team to explore further the graphic expression of the Indigenous culture in the park. For example, Indigenous designs could be embedded in the concrete pavement or walls. Imagery of animals, both mythical and historical, was also suggested to explore further and represent in the park design. Permanent art is seen as more powerful.

LANGUAGE

There is a strong desire to normalize the Indigenous language in City of Vancouver. There are lots of opportunity through wayfinding, signage and place naming. The project team will be guided by the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations on how, when and where to use their languages.



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Carver working on the Survivor's Pole (Credit: Susanne Tabata 2016)

5 OUTCOMES



5.1

PARK IDENTITY

VISION STATEMENT

Early 2018, the Park Board Reconciliation planner, leading this engagement work, prepared a vision statement to ground the new vision for the park design, rooted in our learnings of Indigenous values and principles. This statement is meant to steer the revised park concept design, anchoring it an indigenous foundation, where all cultural communities of Vancouver are welcomed.



Cedar (Credit: Lisa Walker)

REPLENISH

We live busy lives; we devote our energies to many things.
We deplete.

We need a place to replenish, to relate to the land and to the water, a way to nourish and to support ourselves and each other. We need to learn a new way to be, and a new way to belong.

For millennia the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations nurtured and were nourished by the land we now call home. Their long and ongoing relationship with this land embodies goals we all have: sustainability, community, and wellness. Their gardening practices ensured food, clothing, and medicine for generation after generation. Their stewardship shaped this place.

Imagine a space for Indigenous Peoples to practice their cultures. Imagine the open arms of the people and their welcome figures that once graced these shores. Imagine returning to that space, and restoring practices that connect people to land. Imagine what it is to belong to a place, and to learn how you belong.

We need to replenish.

We need to reconnect to the land. We need a place inspired by and supporting Indigenous cultural practice.

We need Northeast False Creek Park.

5.2 NEW GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As mentioned in the introduction, three themes emerged early in the process to guide the draft park concept design: nature, community and destination. As a result of the extended engagement with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, we wanted to weave in what we learned, while preserving the engagement done to date with the park stakeholders. Through this reconciliation journey, it became clear that the park's identity was meant to grow from Indigenous values and principles. The design principles below are new guiding principles that complement the work done previously.

IDENTITY

1. *Rooted in Local First Nations Cultures*
 - 1.1. Increase visibility and reveal presence of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations in the park
 - 1.2. Express Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh values and principles
 - 1.3. Create a place inspired by and supporting Indigenous cultural practices
2. *Replenishing*
 - 2.1. Reconnect to land and water
 - 2.2. Create a place for nourishment and connection with each other
 - 2.3. Create a place of belonging for all Vancouverites



5.3 RECONCILIATION PARK PROGRAM ELEMENTS

New elements that foster and embody reconciliation have been added to the program of the park. We will work to combine them with the previous park programs. Within this new identity, they will take precedence. These program elements, within an indigenous park identity, will make the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations' culture visible on the land and prominent as rights holder in Vancouver's multicultural context. We will work with the park stakeholders and the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations to spatially layout these programs in the revised park concept design.

- Water Access/ Welcoming Shore
- Outdoor Gathering Space
- Pavilion
- Space for Traditional Cultural and Ceremonial Events
- Opportunity to Learn from local First Nations
- Indigenous Approach to Planting
- Indigenous Public Art



Thunderbird 2017 (Credit: Pablo Cesar Palma)

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