

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

7. Protecting and Enhancing Greenspace for the East End, Chinatown, Hogan's Alley and Strathcona

Submitted by: Councillor Fry

WHEREAS

1. Since 1971, the city-owned road right-of-way and ersatz greenspace on the east side of Gore Avenue between Keefer and Union Street consisting of a non-titled non-parcel north of East Georgia Street and a non-titled parcel south of East Georgia Street (722 Gore Avenue) has been maintained for the benefit of local residents with Park Board groundskeeping funded by the city;
2. The greenspace, a vestige of a highway on-ramp right of way, was created after the successful community-led fight to stop the freeway through Chinatown, Hogan's Alley and Strathcona. Designed by Justice and Webb Landscape Architects, the space included an arboreal path and grandstand, but over time has suffered civic neglect and uncertain status. At current, the de facto community park includes a walking path with trees and benches at the northern end, the southern portion has 21 mature trees including a rare giant Sequoia;
3. Posted on June 2024, the Vancouver Tree Canopy Assessment (2022)¹ identified Strathcona as the only neighbourhood with tree canopy cover of less than 10 per cent. Across Gore Avenue in Chinatown, the tree canopy is less than five per cent and the heat island effect is magnified, creating an unsafe environment for the many vulnerable residents, in particular seniors living in older supportive and SRO housing;
4. The Strathcona, Chinatown and Hogan's Alley areas are collectively the sites of historic displacement and marginalization², and today still home to significant vulnerable populations many of whom lack access to quality greenspace. St Paul's Hospital campus and anticipated redevelopment of Hogan's Alley block (bordered by Union, Prior, Gore and Main) will exacerbate need for more local serving public greenspace;
5. Recent plans for a temporary fire hall at 722 Gore³ that would have seen tree loss and impermeable resurfacing have been paused pending a re-evaluation of location options. Community concerns prompted by the proposal articulated the importance and need for more (not less) neighbourhood greenspace;
6. The Vancouver Board of Park and Recreation, on October 7, 2024,⁴ declared its interest and intent to preserve the green space at the northeast corner of Gore/Union, initially under care and custody of the Park Board, and eventually as

¹ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-tree-canopy-assessment-2022.pdf>

² <https://spacing.ca/vancouver/2013/08/12/the-end-of-hogans-alley-part-1/>

³ <https://rezoning.vancouver.ca/applications/722-gore-ave/application-booklet.pdf>

⁴ <https://parkboardmeetings.vancouver.ca/2024/20241007/index.htm>

a permanent park with a request to Mayor and Council to arrange ways and means to give effect to this interest and intent;

7. In a memo dated April 19, 2024 ⁵ Council were supplied with background information on the tools to designate parks under the *Vancouver Charter*, including:
 - a. Permanent Public Park under Section 488(1);
 - b. Temporary Public Park under Section 488(2); or
 - c. Custody, Care and Management (“CCM”) under Section 488(3).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back with recommendations for park designation of the city-owned sites inclusive of 722 Gore and adjoining right of way to Keefer Street, and with considerations for the most appropriate and expeditious form of designation under the authority of the *Vancouver Charter*.

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⁵ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2024-04-19-memo-to-mayor-and-council-parks-designation-update.pdf>