PROMOTING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
REDESIGN OF NELSON PARK

by

ROSANNA WATSON

B.A., McGill University, Montreal, 2000

A THESIS SUBMISSION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Landscape Architecture)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

February 2007

© Rosanna Watson, 2007
Abstract

Nelson Park is situated in a dense urban environment in the heart of the West End of Vancouver B.C. This neighborhood park acts as a backyard to many West End residents, a short cut for residents to cut through, and has a playground and school for young children. The park is visually permeable with multiple site lines throughout. It is at times a popular destination for a number of local users. However, these features do not deter drug users, dealers, criminals and other undesirables from regularly using the space thus making it feel unsafe and uncomfortable for legitimate users.

Nelson Park has the potential to play an integral role in the formation and continuation of social groups. This graduation project redesigns Nelson Park to increase the success of this public space by reducing user conflicts and improving the sense of security and community in Nelson Park. The redesign will attempt to fulfill the parks potential as a place for all legitimate users to enjoy.
Table of Contents

Abstract........................................................................................................................................... ii
Table of Contents ................................................................................................................................ vii
List of Tables ....................................................................................................................................... v
List of Figures ........................................................................................................................................ vi
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................. viii
1. Statement of Intent ........................................................................................................................... 1
2. Literature Review .............................................................................................................................. 2
   2.1 History of the Public Park ........................................................................................................... 2
   2.2 Importance of the Public Park .................................................................................................... 4
   2.3 Successful Urban Spaces ............................................................................................................. 4
   2.4 Safety in Urban Parks ................................................................................................................. 5
      2.4.1 Methods to Improve Safety in Urban Parks ........................................................................ 6
      2.4.2 Reforming the Undesirable ............................................................................................... 8
3. Precedent Studies and Research ....................................................................................................... 9
   3.1 Union Square Park and Greenmarket, New York ...................................................................... 9
   3.2 Lafayette Square Park, Oakland, California .............................................................................. 14
   3.3 Victory Square Park- Vancouver, BC ....................................................................................... 16
   3.4 Daneshjoo Park, Tehran, Iran .................................................................................................... 19
   3.5 Community Gardens as a Public Park ...................................................................................... 22
      3.5.1 High Park Children’s Garden, Toronto, Ontario .............................................................. 22
   3.6 Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 24
4. Site Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 26
   4.1 Context ....................................................................................................................................... 26
      4.1.1 Location ............................................................................................................................... 26
      4.1.2 Size ..................................................................................................................................... 26
      4.1.3 Program .............................................................................................................................. 26
   4.2 Historical Context ....................................................................................................................... 27
      4.2.1 History of the West End .................................................................................................... 27
      4.2.2 History of Nelson Park ...................................................................................................... 29
   4.3 Related Community Facilities .................................................................................................... 32
      4.3.1 Facilities in Nelson Park .................................................................................................... 32
      4.3.2 Facilities around Nelson Park ............................................................................................ 33
      4.3.3 Parks, Community Centre and Schools in the West End ................................................ 35
   4.4 Access ....................................................................................................................................... 36
      4.4.1 Vehicular Access ................................................................................................................ 36
      4.4.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Access ......................................................................................... 37
   4.5 Users .......................................................................................................................................... 37
      4.5.1 West End Demographics .................................................................................................. 37
      4.5.2 Park Demographics .......................................................................................................... 38
   4.6 Site Opportunities and Challenges ............................................................................................. 39
      4.6.1 Opportunities ..................................................................................................................... 39
      4.6.2 Challenges ......................................................................................................................... 40
   4.7 Site Inventory and Analysis ......................................................................................................... 40
      4.7.1 Vegetation ........................................................................................................................... 40
      4.7.2 Hydrology and Topography .............................................................................................. 41
      4.7.3 Exposure and Views .......................................................................................................... 42
      4.7.4 Night Lighting .................................................................................................................... 43
   4.8 Questionnaires ............................................................................................................................ 43
   4.9 Direct Observations and Interviews ......................................................................................... 46
      4.9.1 Pedestrian Circulation ...................................................................................................... 46
      4.9.2 Zones within Nelson Park ................................................................................................. 48
      4.9.3 Interviews with Public ....................................................................................................... 51
      4.9.4 Conclusions from Objective, Observational and Anecdotal Data .................................... 52
5. Proposed Design

5.1 Concept

5.2 Project Goals

5.3 Project Objectives

5.4 Design Objectives

5.4.1 Improve Security and Safety

5.4.2 Reduce User Conflicts

5.4.3 Improve Maintenance and Facilities

5.4.4 Enhance Nelson Park's Connections with Surrounding Community

5.5 Methodology

5.6 Landscape Plan

6. Design Goals and Strategies

6.1 Goal 1, Strategy 1

6.2 Goal 2, Strategy 1

6.3 Goal 2, Strategy 2

6.4 Goal 2, Strategy 3

6.5 Goal 3, Strategy 1

6.6 Goal 3, Strategy 2

6.6.1 Mosaic Entrance

6.6.2 Kiosk Entrance

6.6.3 Orchard Entrance

6.7 Goal 3, Strategy 3

6.7.1 Community Gardens

6.8 Goal 3, Strategy 4

6.8.1 Passive Recreation: Farmer's Market

6.8.2 Passive Recreation: Picnic Tables

6.8.3 Passive Recreation: Garden Café

6.8.4 Active recreation: Grass Area

6.8.5 Active recreation: Main Gathering Space

6.9 Goal 4, Strategy 1

6.10 Goal 4, Strategy 2

7. Conclusion

8. Challenges

9. References

10. Appendix

10.1 Perry and Associates Questionnaire

10.2 Interviews with Park Users
List of Tables

Table 1 Methods to Improve Safety ................................................................. 24
Table 2 User Groups and User Frequency ...................................................... 38
Table 3 Major Issues in Nelson Park ............................................................... 43
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Central Park, New York</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Arial View of Union Square Park (2006)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Union Square Greenmarket, New York</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Grand Entrance to Union Square Plaza</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Lafayette Square Park</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>People Gathered in Victory Square Park for the Remembrance Day Observance</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Master Plan of Victory Square Park</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Victory Square Park</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Public Art Along the Stage Area</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>Seating along the Edge of the Park</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Daneshjoo Park: Map of Social and Antisocial Behaviour</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>High Park Children's Garden</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>High Park Children's Garden</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Map of Vancouver</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>Panoramic View of Nelson Park</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>Nelson Park</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>Map of Off-Leash Dog Area</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18</td>
<td>Popular Off-leash Dog Area</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19</td>
<td>Farmers Market</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20</td>
<td>Farmers Market</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21</td>
<td>View of the West End with Coal Harbour in Foreground</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22</td>
<td>Heritage Homes that Surround Nelson Park</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 23</td>
<td>1925 Fire Insurance Map</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 24</td>
<td>Facilities &amp; Non Market Housing Surrounding Nelson Park</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 25</td>
<td>Lord Roberts Annex</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 26</td>
<td>Lord Roberts Annex</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 27</td>
<td>Lord Roberts Annex</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 28</td>
<td>Lord Roberts Annex</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 29</td>
<td>Field House</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 30</td>
<td>Mole Hill Child Care Centre</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 31</td>
<td>Dr Peters Centre</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 32</td>
<td>Retirement Home</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 33</td>
<td>Mole Hill Community Garden</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 34</td>
<td>Mole Hill Community</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 35</td>
<td>Parks/Community Centre and Schools in the West End</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 36</td>
<td>Street Network surrounding Nelson Park</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 37</td>
<td>No direct Access from Bute and Pendrell</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 38</td>
<td>Location of Nelson Park in Relation to Davie, Robson and Burrard Street</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 39</td>
<td>Fall Color</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 40</td>
<td>Big leaf Maples Dominate a Corner of the Playground</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 41</td>
<td>Lost Streams of the Lower Fraser River 1995</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 42</td>
<td>Poor Drainage Under a Bench</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 43</td>
<td>Poor Drainage Along the Southern Edge of the Park</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 44</td>
<td>Hydrology Map</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 45</td>
<td>North East View of Bute Street from Nelson Park</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 46</td>
<td>Existing Lighting Plan</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 47</td>
<td>Frequency of Paths Used at Nelson Park During Peak Hours</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 48</td>
<td>Observations of Social and Antisocial Behaviors</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 49</td>
<td>Location of Interviews</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 50</td>
<td>Concept Diagram</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 51</td>
<td>Flow Chart</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 52</td>
<td>Landscape Plan</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 53</td>
<td>Seating That Promotes Social Interaction Along the Edges of the Park</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

I want to thank all who have assisted me in this project: my thesis committee members Doug Patterson, William Marsh and Steve Clark for taking the time to guide me through the process and Cynthia Girling for her continued assistance. I would especially like to thank Levi, my family and friends for putting up with me and providing me never ending patience, support and encouragement.
1 Statement of Intent

The redesign of Nelson Park provides the opportunity to increase positive uses, attract users of all ages, enhance enjoyment of the space, and improve the overall sense of community in the Park. Community connections can be promoted by programming and designing spaces that stimulate social interaction and cater to the needs of the public.
2 Literature Review

2.1 History of the Public Park

In the 1850's, public parks became more prevalent in the North American landscape. Urban parks grew out of an effort to solve urban problems arising from the twin processes of industrialization and urbanization. Human health and the appearance of cities improved when green space was introduced for exercise and relaxation (Marcus, 1998).

The first type of park that developed in America, between 1850-1900 was the pleasure ground/garden. In response to overcrowded, unsanitary condition of newly industrialized cities, pleasure grounds combined gardens, small water bodies, outdoor concert grounds, restaurants and architectural features. They were generally located at the edge of the city where land was cheaper and were generally intended for special Sunday outings (Marcus, 1998). A well known landscape architect by the name of Frederick Law Olmsted designed many of the great pleasure grounds of this era. With the help of Calvert Vaux, Olmstead designed Central Park in New York. They transformed the once treeless, rocky, stagnant swampland into a picturesque setting filled with masses of trees, water bodies, sweeping meadows and curved pedestrian pathways (Cranz, 2000).

Figure 1 Central Park, New York
Another type of park that emerged around the 1900’s was the Reform Park. This park intended to improve the living conditions of working people and typically consisted of a square block or two of land surrounded by housing. It became the first true neighborhood park since it was located in the inner city. As a result, recreational needs could be met daily rather than on occasional outings to the city’s outskirts. This type of park was used mainly for children and families since it usually contained a children’s playground.

Between 1930 and 1965 the recreational facility was introduced which intended to serve the needs of all age groups. Swimming pools became the most popular feature and park structures became standardized with little recognition of context and topography. The recreational facility became a highly utilitarian outlet that rarely incorporated nature into the design. Greenery was intended primarily for people’s backyards.

Open Space was the next public park design to gain popularity in the early 1960’s. Citizens and professionals began to view unbuilt, neglected spaces as potential sources of psychic relief. Adventure playgrounds and tot lots were designed in these spaces as places for free form play. Plazas were also considered open space and were designed to increase the attractiveness of central business districts. These spaces were more commonly used as pleasant rest spots for business people on lunch breaks.

Of the four types of parks described, the neighborhood park will be the focus of this paper. Although Nelson Park is classified as a neighborhood park, it does have other park types embedded within it. For example, there are spaces within the park that function as open space and Lord Roberts Annex School (in Nelson Park) could be considered a recreational facility for school children. It’s evident that parks can be an amalgamation of several park types.

Although parks have always reflected immediate social goals, the challenge lies in designing parks that recognize the importance of incorporating nature, are deeply embedded in their context, are able to meet the present needs of the community, and have the capacity and ability to adapt to future needs.
2.2 Importance of the Public Park

Public parks play a significant role in enriching people’s lives by contributing to a sense of community and place in society. The existence of a community can be confirmed when people observe and participate in outdoor activities and shared tasks. These activities tend to make people feel as though they are a part of a larger group. In his book *Public Space* (1992), Stephen Carr states that “public spaces allow for the flow of human exchange, channels for movement, nodes of communication, and common grounds for play and recreation” (Carr 1992 p.3). These spaces are meant to serve and feel owned by all the public. They also contribute to the formation and continuation of social groups. It is through public life that people can voice their common and individual needs and petition for change. Public places allow for casual encounters in the course of daily life that can bind people together and give their life meaning and power (Carr, 1992).

When these spaces are missing or diminished in a community, people have trouble establishing a strong sense of connection to their local community. This in turn, reduces the likelihood of mutual help and support between one another. Marcus (1998) suggests that there is a correlation between lack of recreational space and juvenile crime. Although criminologists can not directly show a link between a lack of public open space and an increase in crime, there is plenty of evidence that crime frequently drops, sometimes dramatically when public space is improved. For example, Phoenix police department reported a 55 percent drop in juvenile crime when the basketball courts and other recreation facilities were kept open until 2am (Marcus, 1998).

Well designed public parks can greatly benefit the local community by strengthening the connection to nature and promoting social connections amongst neighbours.

2.3 Successful Urban Spaces

There are many factors that contribute to the success of an urban public space. People tend to enjoy spending prolonged periods of time in spaces where, according to William Whyte (1980); other legitimate users are present, there’s a variety of formal and informal seating, it’s a sunny location protected from the wind, water is present in some
form (i.e. water fountain), food as available (i.e. cafes, kiosks) and the space is connected to the surrounding street.

Whyte (1980) argues that designers frequently need to be aware that one of the most desirable park activities is people watching and adds “What attracts people most it would appear is other people.” In addition, activities are generally more fun when there’s an audience. As a result, Whyte claims that designers should provide plenty of different types of seating in highly popular areas such as those that afford a good look at the passing scene. Sun and water are also important elements that attract people to a space. The sound of water can not only mask out street noise (a waterfall at 75 decibels is higher than the level out on the street) but also other peoples conversations thereby adding to a feeling of privacy. Availability of food and the protection from heavy wind are other criteria that attract people to a space.

Whyte introduces the concept of triangulation to promote social interaction. Triangulation is “an external stimulus that provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to each other as though they were not strangers” (Whyte, 1980 p. 94). The stimulus can be a physical object or sight which has the effect of drawing people together and creating a friendlier atmosphere. In Nelson Park, dogs act as the stimulus to initiate conversations amongst park users.

These factors will be incorporated into the redesign of Nelson Park and will help to contribute to its success as a neighborhood park.

2.4 Safety in Urban Parks

Landscape architects frequently need to find ways to improve the sense of security in urban parks, particularly since crime and unlawful behavior occurs frequently in public, urban spaces. The Parks Board often attempt to deter homeless people, drug addicts and criminals from using public spaces through methods such as fencing off the area and restricting use. However, this can have the reverse effect of scaring away “Desirables” (legitimate users) who believe that the space is fenced off because undesirables must frequent the area. As a result, “Undesirables” (such as homeless, criminals and drug addicts) might be more attracted to these unused spaces. In “The Social Life of Small Urban Places” William Whyte accurately describes this type of
situation by stating that “places designed with distrust get what they’re looking for and it is in them, ironically that you will most likely find a wino” (Whyte, 1980 p.61). One needs to try and understand the underlying causes of safety problems in urban environments in order to properly address them. Otherwise, desperate attempts to find quick solutions such as removing shrubs and increasing police patrols and lighting might not in fact improve safety and can further exacerbate the problems (Jo-Anne Egan, 1991). For example, shrubs were removed from Nelson Park as an attempt to improve safety but the park nevertheless continues to feel unsafe to many user groups. Although it might be perceived that the easy answer to improving security would be to put up fences, the more rewarding challenge is building relationships between people and space (Newman, 1995).

2.4.1 Methods to Improve Safety in Urban Parks

There is an abundance of research on strategies to improve safety in parks. CEPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), (Wallis 1980), in particular has attempted to reduce crime and the fear of crime in a target setting by reducing criminal opportunities and fostering positive social interactions among users. CEPTED lists several mechanisms for change that can be used to significantly improve security in Nelson Park (Wallis, 1980):

- Programming activities
- Extending the use of facilities so that legitimate users are present throughout the day
- Attracting women and children to the space to deter illegal activities
- Promoting a sense of community among legitimate uses to discourage criminal activity by others
- Removing obstructions that limit views of the park
- Establishing territorial domains
- Personalizing the environment

Programming activities that attract legitimate users encourages these users to become acquainted with one another to make fuller use of the area (Wallis 1980). William Whyte claims that “The best way to handle the problem of undesirables is to
make a place attractive to everyone else” (Whyte 1980 p.63). If a public space attracts desirable activities and users throughout the day, people should automatically feel safer simply by having legitimate users around. As a result, even if undesirables come, they disappear in the crowd. Creating attractions such as a restaurant and introducing new functions such as 100 lightweight moveable chairs to draw desirable users was the approach used to reclaim Bryant Park in New York from legions of drug dealers and other undesirables.

Extending the use of nearby facilities has also been known to discourage vandalism and illegal activities. For example, Lord Roberts Annex School (in Nelson Park) could have after school programs which would increase the number of users coming to the park particularly at off hours.

Activities that attract women and children should also be promoted. Aminzadeh and Afshar (2003) found that these types of spaces tend to show less antisocial behaviour.

Promoting a sense of community is another method which can help to improve the sense of security. In her book “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” Jane Jacobs stresses that the basis for community security is a strong sense of social cohesion and a feeling of control over one’s “home” turf (Wallis, 1980). Elizabeth Woods (Wallis, 1980) also mentions that paid surveillance could never exert the control provided by an involved and interested community. Burgess also notes that “In order to feel safe, people need to know that there are other people around who are looking out for them and who could come to their assistance if needed. “If they feel that their cries for help will not be heard or responded to, they will avoid that place thus making it more unsafe” (Burgess, 1994 p.17).

Removing any visual obstructions would enhance opportunity for park surveillance (Wallis, 1980). Establishing territorial domains allow spaces that are not easily identified to be divided into areas that are associated with a specific group of individuals. The tactic is based on the belief that people are more likely to defend areas that are clearly assigned to them (Wallis, 1980). Parks such as San Francisco’s Buena Vista Park (Mozingo, 1994) and Laleh park in Tehran, Iran (Behnaz and Afshar, 2003) have reduced user conflict between homeless and other user groups by allowing enough space for distinct groups of people, usually defined by vegetative buffers. The result is
that the park it still intensively used by children, families, and homeless people and is impossible for one group to dominate because of the size, topography and vegetation in the park.

Personalizing the environment is another design mechanism that can be used to reduce crime in public parks. Opportunities should be provided for people to decorate or otherwise enhance their own personal space or areas immediately adjacent to it (Wallis, 1980). This promotes a sense of ownership and increases interest in maintaining and monitoring the space.

2.4.2 Reforming the Undesirable

Although homeless, drug addicts, and street youths are classified as undesirables, it must be noted that not all undesirables pose a threat to the public. Certain types of homeless people such as relatively permanent residents in fact make an effort to keep the park clean and are therefore help to make a contribution to society (interview with homeless users Aug 10, 2006). In her research on homelessness, Mozingo (1994 p.112) states that “Those who have bothered to study and talk to homeless people tell us that they, like all of us, need a place in this world to connect, to find refuge and most often public space is the only place this can happen. Homeless people will not go away if other people intensively use a public space.” Public space is a place to eat, sleep and call home for many homeless people.

There are of course other types of undesirables who perform antisocial behaviors that are not regarded as normal according to ethical and legal criteria, these include drug abusers, robbers, vandals and so on.

While landscape architects need to find ways to enhance public security they must also be advocates of the true sense of “publicness” in our public places (Mozingo, 1994). This sense of true publicness is possible when a public space makes special provisions for facilities that attract homeless people that don’t pose a threat to society. These types of facilities should be located where other citizens can avoid them if they chose and should be well lit and easily viewed and patrolled by police (Wallis, 1980).
This research and the following precedent studies will provide a basis for addressing safety problems in Nelson Park.

3 Precedent Studies and Research

Union Square Park and Greenmarket in New York City, Lafayette Square Park in Oakland California, Victory Square in Vancouver B.C, Daneshjooy Park in Tehran, and the High Park Children’s Garden in Toronto, Ontario were chosen as precedent studies because all have been redesigned to improve safety conditions in a public park.

3.1 Union Square Park and Greenmarket, New York

For over 170 years, Union Square has been a hub for hotels, theatres, fashion, recreation and a gathering place where labour unions, communists, anarchists, and socialists frequently meet and debate (Project for Public Spaces). Over the years, Union Square Park’s 3.59 acres has undergone several major redesigns:

1839 Union Square opened to the public and was enclosed by an iron picket fence, consisting mainly of lush plantings and a large central fountain. As New York City’s downtown expanded northward, Union Square became an important commercial and residential center.

1872 The park was redesigned by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux where the enclosing fence and hedge was removed, a variety of hardy trees planted and the sidewalks widened.

1928 Union Square was completely demolished to accommodate a new underground concourse for the subway. Park alterations included the straightening of park paths and the construction of a colonnaded pavilion.

1976 Union Square Greenmarket opened up on the north side of the park, offering a cornucopia of fresh food and plants.

1985 Union Square underwent major renovations. Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates helped with the design of a new plaza at the south end of the park,
relocated the paths to make the park more accessible, planted a central lawn, and installed new lighting and two subway kiosks.

1993 Two new playgrounds were constructed
1994 A restaurant opened in the sunken courtyard outside the pavilion (New York Parks Board).

During the 1970’s, Union Square became run-down and threatened by general misuse and deterioration. It was considered unsafe since it became a popular spot for drug dealing. “It was impossible to walk through this one block park without being accosted by drug dealers and, therefore, pedestrians and legitimate park users avoided it when possible (Project for Public Spaces)”. Several factors contributed to Union Square’s antisocial behaviour:

- Activity was directed into the interior (where undesirable behaviour could be readily hidden by a variety of design features)
- A perimeter wall and vegetation formed the edge of the park
- The entrances were closed in and uninviting
- A series of steps to the interior of the park increased the pedestrians sense of enclosure and separation (Diana Chapin, 1991)

The Park’s Department and community wanted to bring back the lunchtime crowd and mothers with young children and as a result, the park was redesigned.
Union square is now considered a successful urban space. Its success is attributed to the following design principles that were implemented in its redesign.

**Activity support:** Union Square Park is always filled with families, office workers at lunchtime and students day and night. The public is attracted to this park and positive use has increased because there are always things to do and see. For example:

**Union Square Greenmarket:** The market attracts people from early morning until afternoon, provides entrepreneurial opportunities, and gives the community a valuable connection to the farms surrounding the city.

It’s located in the parking lot alongside the park Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. A special Holiday Market operates at end of each year, featuring crafts and gift items selected on the basis of uniqueness and design quality.

“Market days draw tens of thousands of people; some just browse, enjoying a leisurely stroll past the vendors, perusing the merchandise. Since the market is not a high-pressure retail environment, it allows people to be comfortable. Vitality and community, long absent, can again be found in and near Union Square, even on days when the market is not operating...

Greenmarket also utilizes a state-sponsored coupon program to
assist low-income people with food purchases” (Project for Public Spaces).

The Union Square Café: The presence of a café increases eyes on the street and promotes use at all times of the day and into the night.

The Playgrounds: Attract families to the park and provides a safe and secure world of play that is accessible and exciting to children with various types of disabilities (website: Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates)

The plaza: The plaza is a space where events takes places on a daily basis and where public art works is constantly on display. The advantage of having the south steps is that the plaza is not directly in front of a residential area enabling more noise to be tolerated.
Accessibility: Union Square Park is extremely accessible to all as one can enter from all sides. There is also a subway transit hub directly beneath which increases accessibility.

Inviting entrance: Although the interior is a popular place to spend time, the grand, inviting main entrance allows the public to enjoy themselves while remaining on the perimeter of the space. This permeability to the street attracts users into the park since people from the street can see the park being used (Project for public spaces).

Well Designed Edges: The distinctive plaza edge created by the two shades of rectangular asphalt block overlapped and collaged in a manner that enlivens the plaza perimeter, maximizes its boundary, and gives the sense that it is radiating outward toward the building fronts. The edges of the park successfully connect to the surrounding neighborhood. Activities such as passive recreation are also relocated to the perimeter of the park.

Increase in activity surrounding the park: A business improvement district that was developed in the area around the park surely attracts more people to the park.

Increase in places to sit: The space appears very comfortable and clean since people sit wherever they feel.

Sense of place/history: The park is filled with numerous monuments and historical representations. In 1997, the United States Department of the Interior designated Union Square Park as a National Historic Landmark because of its significance in American labour history.
Visibility: Walls and changes in elevation were minimized and view corridors enhanced.

All of these factors work together to create a safe, highly desirable destination for the public. Many of the above design strategies will be applied to the redesign of Nelson Park.

3.2 Lafayette Square Park, Oakland, California

Up until the redesign of the park in 1999, Lafayette Square Park was a neglected space and haven for drug dealers and other undesirables. The decline in economic conditions drew transient and homeless people to the park. Over the years, the park served the needs of many groups such as an outdoor debating society and elders regularly gathered there to play checkers and card games. Mother Wright, a long time Oakland activist, initiated a feeding program for homeless people (Briggs-Marsh, Warren, 2000).

In 1994 Walter Hood was called upon to begin the process of revitalization and develop a master plan for the park’s redesign. The Non Profit Center for Urban Family Life identified six goals in a community meeting: provide a mix of uses, improve the parks image, create a safe park for all, improve existing facilities and provide new ones, involve community members in re-planning the park, and provide housing and other services for homeless people who use the park. Budget constraints precluded the last of the six but the other goals were adopted and eventually met (Owen-Viani 2002).

Walter Hood redesigned Lafayette square with the intention of creating a place for all. He took the premise that since people are engaging in certain behaviors regardless of their legality (drinking beer, sleeping overnight, barbecuing) designers may as well plan for these activities instead of acting as if they are not taking place. As the result, the park welcomes homeless people who have congregated there for years as well as office workers who have recently moved into the new downtown buildings. Included in the
design are a community building, public toilets, game tables, a tot lot with a large climbing structure and a hummock (an earth sculpture) with a submerged fountain.

Figure 5 Lafayette Square Park

Lafayette Square Park attributes its success to the following design principles:

**Activity support:** As many as 150 people are fed in the park every week by organized urban missionaries and by passers-by who drop off food. Craft fairs, folk art performances and jazz concerts attract people of all ages.

**Well designed edges:** The park provides spaces to hang out on the periphery so that this seclusion from the park’s interior welcomes people who may feel apprehensive about the unemployed or homeless users. The park is designed so that pedestrians find themselves in the park seemingly without having entered it.

**Increase in sense of community:** No one is excluded from the park. This includes transients, the homeless and recovering substance abusers. Hillsman, credits the people she met in the park for helping her recover from drug addiction. “Everybody here is family to me,” said Hillsman, who has been coming to the park to eat for the past 11 or 12 years (Rick DelVecchio,1998).

**Distinct spaces/territorial domains were established:** Lafayette square is made up of a collection of spaces with semitransparent walls so that inhabitants are conscious of others but can also maintain a sense of privacy. These spaces allow user groups to occupy different spaces without intruding on others.
**Sense of place/history:** Throughout the design process, Walter Hood attempts to layer new ideas onto old. For example, tiles in concrete paving and an ancient giant oak recount the history of Oakland.

Lafayette Square Park has succeeded in creating and improving the physical and social environments to maximize human potential (Briggs-Marsh, Warren, 2000).

### 3.3 Victory Square Park- Vancouver, BC

Victory Square Park occupies a .36 hectare triangle of land in downtown Vancouver’s Eastside, an area that has been struggling with the pressures of socio-spatial polarisation for some time. The park is the connector between the downtown, Gastown and Chinatown. It is framed by Vancouver Community College and some of the finest heritage buildings in the City. The square is bounded by Hastings Street, a busy principal thoroughfare, Cambie, Pender and Hamilton Street. A noble granite cenotaph stands amongst large, proud trees, a rolling lawn and small and large gathering spaces, as a memorial to Vancouverites who lost their lives in the First World War. The park is known for the Remembrance Day observance that it hosts every year (Parks and Recreation website). The following provides a brief description of the history of the site:

- **1891** The original site for Vancouver’s first court house
- **1912** Court house torn down and later filled with recruiting marquees for World War I soldiers. The site is also the point at which the survey was taken to establish the urban grid.
- **1918** The Provincial Government leased the property to Vancouver for 99 years and at this time it was known as Government Square. Returning soldiers used the site to demonstrate conditions in the dugouts and trenches of the war and carried out military displays firing rockets into the air, all to raise money for charity.
1922 park was given the name Victory Square
1924 the Cenotaph was built through public subscription. It’s made up of granite engraved with suitable inscriptions, and is kept continuously banked high with wreaths of flowers and adorned with national flags.

Victory Square was chosen as a case study because similar to Union Square Park and Lafayette Square, this space has been a popular spot for drug use and dealing for quite some time. Drug dealing regularly took place along the edges and within the interior of the park, particularly in places hidden by coniferous trees. Cars were constantly broken into along nearby streets. Poor sight lines, marginal lighting and the regular presence of undesirable created a space that was perceived by many as unsafe (Parks and Recreation website).

Although downtown Vancouver’s Eastside has an increase in people living below the poverty line, the entrenchment of an open air drug market, epidemic levels of HIV/AIDS and rising crime rates, it has also undergone extensive residential and commercial revitalisation (Smith, 2003). Along with this renewal came the redesign of Victory Square between 2002 and 2004. The Parks Board undertook maintenance work to remove fencing and overgrown shrubs, improve signage and allocate funds for lighting improvements. Although budget constraints prevented some of the details from coming forth, landscape architects, Johnathan Losee and Camille Sleeman and Architect Bill Pecket redesigned the space to include:

- Stairs for people to sit and view the stage area
- Amphitheatre-like lawn to view the stage
- A wheelchair accessible path through the site
- Stage relocation and improvement
- Monitored washroom facilities
- Proper lighting: “Soldier Hats” that resemble replicas of the First World War helmets
The redesign of Victory Square Park has caused a significant reduction in illegal activity and as a result, people perceive the park as safer. The park’s enhancement improved safety by:

**Increasing visibility/connection to streets:**
Sight lines throughout the park were improved and hiding spots were eliminated. As a result, the entire park is visible from the street.

**Activity support:** Afternoon concerts and a jazz festival have attracted more than 1000 people to the park. Skateboarders are another user group that are welcome to use the space.

**Inviting Entrances:**
The welcoming entrances, (especially the one diagonal to Vancouver Community College), draws students and other legitimate users to the park.

**Sense of place/history:** The gathering space
around the Cenotaph was improved. As a result, the sense of history and potential gathering space is enhanced. Public art also draw users to the space.

**Increase in places to sit:** Informal (stairs and contoured lawn) and formal seating (benches) attract users to the park.

Overall, the redesign of Victory Square Park has helped to improve the sense of security through open sight lines and physical features that attract legitimate users.

![Seating Along the Edge of the Park](image)

**3.4 Daneshjoo Park, Tehran, Iran**

Daneshjoo Park is a 3.2 ha space, on the junction of two main streets in Tehran. It has a geometrical, subdivided grid layout and the routes make up the dominant and shaping elements of the park. The surrounding residents refer to Daneshjoo Park as the addicts' park because, over the years, it has become a popular spot for drug addicts and dealers.

![Daneshjoo Park: Map of Social and Antisocial Behaviour](image)
Research was conducted by Behnaz Aminzadeh and Dokhi Afshar in 2004 to determine whether there is a relationship between the manner in which drug addicts and dealers use the park and what these design characteristics might look like. Aminzadeh and Afshar also explored how these spaces can be transformed into more appropriate ones, so that their drug-abuse-related issues can be minimized. Several observations were made with regards to where drugs addicts and dealers prefer to inhabit the park:

- Addicts prefer uncrowded, poor quality spaces that are unattractive to the public.
- Drug dealers are drawn to crowded places such as the entrances in order to sell drugs
- Single trees attract small private groups, with both social and anti-social behaviours.
- The shady and semi-dark routes and the main entrance are used more frequently by drug dealers.
- The location of drug dealers in crowded places, especially the entrances and edges, has a direct connection with the main thoroughfares of the city. The disorganization, confusion, chaos and poor quality of the entrances have a direct relation with attracting undesirables.
- Research shows that drug users use the same type of space, even in parks with completely different scales and locations within the city
- Drug addicts tend to congregate in areas which plants have made chaotic, dark and shady, where there are trees with low and vast crowns and where the view is limited.

This study made some very relevant, useful points on how to design spaces which deter undesirables. The following is a list of design principles that were used as guidelines for Daneshjoo Park.

**Activity support:** Activities that attract all members of the family are recommended, as they increase safety. Multifunctional spaces with different sets of users are more stable and less vulnerable. A lack of connection amongst spaces reduces social interactions, thus increasing the likelihood of antisocial behavior.
**Design adaptable and flexible spaces:** An adaptable design is one that affords different standing patterns of behaviour at different times or simultaneously without undergoing physical change. A design is flexible when its structure is easily changed to accommodate different needs. Designing a space that’s flexible and adaptable increases the possibility of social behaviours and thus decreases anti-social ones.

**Inviting entrance:** Design entrances as spaces which provide conditions for short stops only and not as places to sit and spend prolonged periods of time in. Drug dealers preferred selling drugs at the main entrances to the park because there’s a more constant flow of people walking by to sell drugs to. If there are benches at the main entrance, they will be more likely to remain in these spaces.

**Well Designed Edges:** The findings of this study demonstrate that this layer should be designed to act as a functional space in increase eyes in the park.

**Accessibility:** Connect all activities on a central organizing system in the form of a triangle which forms a unified network.

**Increasing places to sit:** The possibility of moving furniture around to provide diversity and adaptability, controlling problematic spaces and directing people away from certain points, should be considered. The use of triangular patterns in the arrangement of benches will increase social interactions. Avoid placing furniture on marginal paths to help keep undesirables away from these spaces.

The results from this precedent study demonstrate that these design principles used to deter undesirables do not necessarily determine the precise form of design, but are a means of improving overall design quality.

The most applicable design principles from the above case studies will be used in the proposed redesign of Nelson Park to help improve the sense of security. Another design element that has been gaining popularity particularly in North America is community gardens. These semi private spaces enhance the sense of community and improve overall park security primarily by increasing and diversifying positive user groups throughout the year. The following section highlights the benefits of community gardens and discusses how High Park Children’s Garden in Toronto has improved safety in High Park.
3.5 Community gardens as a public park

Community gardens have been gaining popularity in North America over the past 30 years due primarily to an increase in leisure time, early retirement, unemployment and rising food cost (Naimark, 1982). Naimark (1982) and Hough (1984) describe several benefits to community gardening:

- Enhances community interactions through cooperation, acts as a meeting ground, strikes up friendships and can bridge the gaps between neighbors
- Significantly reduces vandalism
- Education
- Transcends barriers of language, age, sex, race and ethnic origin
- Skill development
- Save money when growing one’s own produce
- In touch with natural processes
- Promotes other activities such as picnics, barbecues, block parties, fairs
- Managed and maintained by gardeners and don’t require attention by municipal parks department
- The soil of gardens is well worked and serves as a sponge for rainwater and helps restore oxygen in the city
- Health: keeps people active and nutritious food is consumed
- Form of therapy. When breast cancer patients participated in gardening activities, they showed a far quicker recovery than patients who didn’t engage in such restorative activity. (Malakoff, 1995)
- Potential employment
- Increased sense of pride and ownership and feeling of control and proof that one is able to change one’s physical surroundings

3.5.1 High Park Children’s Garden, Toronto, Ontario

High Park Children’s Garden is a .75 acre community garden in one of Toronto’s largest parks, High Park (400 acres). In 1998, the garden was built on an old asphalt parking lot as an outcome of the High Park Report findings on safety. In order to
diversify its users and increase public use of the south end of High Park, the children's garden was designed. Since its installation, foot traffic has visibly increased in the south end of High Park, with many people making the garden a destination. It is now the City of Toronto's busiest children's garden and a focus of local community pride (Project for Public Spaces).

Projects for Public Spaces notes that the High Park Children's Garden "offers children and community members a chance to learn about, experience, and enjoy urban ecology and organic gardening. Through hands-on creative programming, children and youth are exposed to Toronto's history, heritage and natural history, food preparation and nutrition, health, drama, art, music, movement, storytelling, and contemporary perspectives on urban environmental issues. The programs also give participants an opportunity to take part in gender neutral, non-competitive activity, while engaging in healthy exercise" (Project for public spaces).

The site features colourful, raised planters in the shape of the 'ABC.' The garden is wheelchair accessible and also features an adjacent large grassy space for activities and play, with picnic tables. Each year, the garden works with around 40 community partners/agencies and over 120 volunteers. Extra harvest from the garden not used for programming is donated to local shelters and soup kitchens. Any remaining food from community events is delivered to local shelters. Since garden construction and initiation of garden programming, an informal neighborhood and volunteer watch has formed, preventing or minimizing vandalism and damage to the garden. Additionally, members of the High Park Volunteer Stewardship Committee regularly visit the garden to monitor it. Most of the space is used for children's garden programming. Programs are delivered to
school groups (JK to grade 8) at the garden space during the months of May, June, September and October. A summer High Park Eco Camp (ages 6-12), combining nature exploration and organic gardening, enjoys the space in July and August. Families often use the picnic shelter and grassy space in the spring and summer for birthday parties and picnics. Seniors use the benches overlooking the garden to read and reflect. Parents with children visit the garden beds as they walk through the park. The site has become a hot spot for community gatherings, for both the higher income and low income surrounding neighborhoods.

Overall the garden has become the focus of local community pride and a site for meeting and greeting, cross-cultural exchange, learning and play. Program participants often return, bringing their siblings or families, to show them what they have grown (Project for Public Spaces).

This brief overview explained how community gardens can benefit the whole community. The following chapter describes in more detail why and how community gardens should be proposed for Nelson Park.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Based on the literature review and precedent studies, the following methods to improve safety will be used in the redesign of Nelson Park:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attract positive activities (activity support)</td>
<td>Wallis (1980), Union Square, Whyte (1980), Lafayette Square, Victory Square, Daneshjoo Park, High Park Children’s Garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend the use of nearby facilities</td>
<td>Wallis (1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attract women and children</td>
<td>Wallis (1980), High Park Children’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote a sense of community</td>
<td>Wallis (1980), High Park Children’s Garden, Lafayette Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing visual obstructions</td>
<td>Wallis (1980), Union Square, Lafayette Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing territorial domains</td>
<td>Wallis (1980), Lafayette Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalizing the environment</td>
<td>Wallis (1980), High Park Children’s Garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting entrance</td>
<td>Union Square, Victory Square, Daneshjoo Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional edge</td>
<td>Union Square, Lafayette Square, Daneshjoo Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in places to sit</td>
<td>Whyte, Union Square, Victory Square, Daneshjoo Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Place, history</td>
<td>Union Square, Lafayette Square, Victory Square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Methods to improve safety
4 Site Introduction

4.1 Context

4.1.1 Location

Nelson Park is located in the West End of Vancouver, BC, one of the most densely populated, diverse, and oldest communities in Western Canada. The West End shares the peninsula with the Downtown, Central Business District and Stanley Park.

4.1.2 Size

Nelson Park covers 1.16 hectares. It is classified as a neighborhood park because of its size, location in a residential setting, and the fact that it consists mainly of a soft landscape of grass and trees. It is one of the few neighborhood parks in the West End that provides a large, green open space for recreation. The park is officially open from 6am to 10pm, year round.

4.1.3 Program

The park currently functions as an off-leach dog park (from 6-8am and 5-10pm), as a short cut for residents to cut through and has a playground and elementary school. It also offers seating and open grassed areas for passive and active recreation. Every
Saturday from June 17 to October 7 a farmers market is set up along Comox Street selling fresh local produce from 9am to 2pm.

![Map of Off-leash Dog Area](image17.png)

![Popular Off-leash Dog Area](image18.png)

![Farmers Market](image19.png)

![Farmers Market](image20.png)

### 4.2 Historical Context

#### 4.2.1 History of the West End

Until the turn of the 20th century, the West End was only sparsely settled, mainly due to its distance (1-2 km) from the old Granville Townsite (Gastown). Through the 1890s the area was logged and gradually replaced with grand Victorian homes for upper-income families (City of Vancouver website). "With the CPR's development of Shaughnessy in 1910, the West End's role as a "high-class" residential area declined and the community's second stage of development began. Apartments were built, homes
along the Robson, Denman and Davie (all streetcar lines) were redeveloped as shops, and larger homes were converted into rooming houses" (City of Vancouver website). Today, few of the Queen Anne, Edwardian Builder or Arts-and-Crafts style homes remain. Some of these homes that were spared and restored currently surround Nelson Park. These homes maintain strong connections to Vancouver's past thereby promoting a sense of place within the community.

Currently, over 42,000 residents occupy the 204 hectares of land in the West End. This community is the most densely populated, intensively active portion of the Lower Mainland. Large numbers of young people have been drawn to the West End for its unique urban lifestyle and large stock of high density rental apartments. This fairly young age composition affects the demand for housing, health care and community facilities such as schools, recreation centres and parks (http://www2.jurock.com/areainfo/vancouver_we.asp). In 2001, the average household income in the West End was $44,375 (City of Vancouver website). Over 30 percent of the population live in apartments built between 1961 and 1970 (City of Vancouver website).

The West End hosts several popular annual festivals including the Symphony of Fire, Pride parade and polar bear swim on new years day. Throngs of Vancouverites and tourists fill the streets during these memorable events.
4.2.2 History of Nelson Park

The space that Nelson Park currently occupies has undergone several major transitions over the past 50 years. While it is called a park, the area is considered an unresolved site since it does not have either temporary or permanent park status. The fact that there used to be a lane through the middle of the park containing underground services, and because there's historically been a school on the property, this site has never been designated by the Park's Board as a true park. There was ongoing controversy and debate over the appropriate uses of the space. After extensive research and interviews
with members of the Vancouver Parks Board, the following historical facts were discovered:

- **1925-1966** Fire insurance maps illustrate that Nelson Park was once filled with several apartments and houses with detached garages.

- **1960** The first record of any park like feature on the site was a wading pool. It is now filled and paved, at the west side of the Lord Robert' Annex School.
- **1962** The Field House south of the pool was built.
- **1974** The configuration of the Park was landscaped and additional playground equipment added.
• **1975** A proposal included a seven-classroom elementary school, a 10 storey apartment complex, a park, day-care centre and community recreation facilities. At this time, the plans for the school included parkland built on the roof and it was still undecided whether to have one large park area or several smaller open area strips (Rick Prashaw, 1975). In the end, only the elementary school (without green infrastructure on the roof) and park were approved.

• **1981** The public strongly opposed the demolition of four rooming houses in the block in front of Comox Street which was supposed to make way for a ponding water feature. This development didn’t seem to make sense primarily because of the already zero vacancy rate in the city (Hossie, 1981)

• **1978-1984** Lord Roberts Annex School and present landscaping was built (Vancouver Parks Board)

• **1986** The parks board commissioned the Coriolis consulting group to design the expansion of Nelson Park. The consultants came up with three proposals: An all park option to include active park space such as tennis courts and a playing field; an all-housing option, involving the restoration of the heritage houses and the replacement of non-heritage houses with new apartments; and a compromise option involving the relocation of heritage houses from Comox Street to vacant lots off Pendrell Street and the development of Comox Street side of the block for active park use (Vancouver Parks Board).

• **1991** *The Province Newspaper* stated that Nelson Park was an underused, poorly designed passive park space which everyone from the casual observer to local residents agreed didn’t work. The article also goes on to discuss the suggested closure of Comox Street which would successfully complete the heritage enclave (Kluckner, 1991)

• **1994** An article in the Vancouver Sun discussed the Vancouver Parks Board proposal to expand Mole Hill by demolishing houses in front of Comox Street (Strachan, 1994).
4.3 Related Community Facilities

![Facilities & Non Market Housing Surrounding Nelson Park](image)

**Figure 24 Facilities & Non Market Housing Surrounding Nelson Park**

### 4.3.1 Facilities in Nelson Park

As previously mentioned, Lord Roberts Annex School which houses kindergarten to grade 3, is located in the park. This facility will play an important role in reshaping the park because connections need to be enhanced between park and school.
A Field House is also located on the park and houses washroom facilities and storage for the school. Washrooms are open on weekends from September to June and seven days a week from July to August.

4.3.2 Facilities Around Nelson Park

Nelson Park is surrounded on all sides by community facilities and residences (three storey homes to apartments). South of the park is The YMCA Mole Hill Child Care Centre which opened in 2003. It offers 25 child care spaces in a natural family-like setting. Its vision is to create an Early Childhood Development Complex where families can get resources and information on childhood development. (YMCA vision and spirit newsletter, summer 2003). Mole Hill
Montessori school (1155 Thurlow St) is also in close proximity to Nelson Park.

A YMCA (955 Burrard Street) is nearby which provides classes for ESL students. These students are known to frequent the park. Another important facility that overlooks the park is the Dr. Peter’s Centre. This facility provides palliative care for people living with HIV/AIDS. “It is a home for those who need comfort, longer term medically complex care, and short term stay for respite or until health improves” (Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation).

St. Paul’s Hospital lies to the East of the park. The Hospital is an acute care, academic and research hospital with over 500 acute care beds. The hospital serves both the local community and patients from across B.C. as well as providing care to disadvantaged populations. Dusk to Dawn Youth Resource Centre is also located within the hospital. It is a drop-in centre serving street youth in the downtown south area operating between the hours of 7:00 pm and 5:30 am (Family services of greater Van).

There are several retirement homes in the West End. One that is particularly relevant to this project overlooks the North eastern portion of Nelson Park.

Mole Hill is located to the south of Nelson Park. Community gardens designed by Thomas Gould (Landscape Architect, Durante Kreuk Ltd.) run along the lane.
4.3.3 Parks, Community Centre and Schools in the West End

Figure 35 Parks/Community Centre and Schools in the West End

As one can see from this map, there is an abundance of waterfront parks and very few neighbourhood parks in the West End. This map highlights the lack of off leash dog parks in the West End. Nelson Park and a small portion of Sunset Beach Park are the only parks that offer off leach green space for dogs in the West End. As a result, this places even higher value and importance on Nelson Park’s use as an off leach dog Park.
4.4 Access

4.4.1 Vehicular Access

The east section of Nelson Park is parallel by a major one way street called Thurlow. This street has high traffic volume throughout the day, especially during peak hours because it’s a commonly used designated access route to the Burrard Street Bridge. Nelson Street borders the north side of the park and turns into a one way street once it crosses Thurlow Street. In order to slow traffic within the residential neighborhoods, many streets have restricted access. For example, there is no direct access to the park from Bute Street.

The nearest bus stops are located along Robson, Davie and Burrard Streets. Most of the parking near Nelson Park is by permit only. Limited visitor parking, one way streets and restricted access make the park less accessible by vehicle. Most park users are typically local residents although some outside visitors do use the park because
of its close proximity to major commercial streets; Davie and Robson (refer to map below).

Figure 38 Location of Nelson Park in Relation to Davie, Robson and Burrard Street

4.4.2 Bicycle and pedestrian access

Nelson Park is accessible by bicycle or foot from three corners of the park. The northern corner by the school playground is inaccessible and closed off by a fence that surrounds the school property. There are no designated bike lanes or bike racks in the park. The paths inside Nelson Park are made up of compact gravel while the outside paths are concrete.

4.5 Users

4.5.1 West End Demographics

Census data from 1996 and 2001 reveal that the population in the West End has increased by 1180 people. This significant increase implies that green space is going to be even more highly valued especially considering that the West End already has few neighbourhood parks. As a result, hardscape should be minimized where possible and nature allowed a place in a community where concrete and infrastructure dominate the
landscape. One also notices that 81.6% of residences in the West End are rentals. This implies that there might be a correlation between the lack of ownership and the lower level of commitment that some West Enders have within their community. Another important point to note is the recent increase in number of families living in the West End (1130 more families). Although changes were made to the family census concept (i.e. two persons living in a same sex common law relationship are now considered a family), this is nevertheless a significant increase that will have an impact on the redesign of the park (Community statistics census data).

In 1996, 37.2% of West Ender’s walked to work. This fact also plays into the redesign of Nelson Park because it implies that there are more eyes on the street and people walking by at certain times of the day. If the park had more activities to participate in, thereby attracting more user groups (including those coming from work), safety concerns could be improved simply through increased, prolonged use of the park.

4.5.2 Park Demographics

There are several major user groups that use Nelson Park. The following table of is based on observations and interviews with the public in 2006: (Aug 10 (2hrs), August 20(3hrs), Sep 12(1hr), Sep 14(4hrs), Nov 21(2hrs),Dec 14 (3hrs), Dec 28th (3hrs), Jan 5(2hrs), Jan 15(2.5hrs), Mar 10(1hr), Mar 13(1.5hrs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User groups</th>
<th>User Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dog walkers</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local residents: including teenagers and families</td>
<td>High for young adults cutting across the park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low for families and teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(although families use school playground)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless people: relatively permanent residents of the park, transient criminals and runaway teenagers (some of whom many have drug and/or alcohol)</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
addictions or mentally ill) (Mozingo, 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User groups</th>
<th>User frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff from Saint Paul's Hospital</td>
<td>Variable. The hospital has a rooftop patio that is used frequently by patients. Staff sometimes visit the park to eat lunch or go for runs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents from Dr Peters Centre</td>
<td>Variable. The centre has its own private outdoor garden patio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly people from the retirement home</td>
<td>Low. The home has its own ground floor garden that isn’t fenced off. Many elderly don’t feel comfortable using the park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL students from YMCA</td>
<td>Low (summer use)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 User groups and user frequency

Although Mole Hill Child Care and Mole Hill Montessori School are close to the park, neither facility takes their children to the park. Mole Hill Child care has their own private outdoor playground. Children and staff from Lord Roberts Annex School only appear to use school property.

4.6 Site Opportunities and Challenges

4.6.1 Opportunities

Nelson Park has the potential to become a highly desirable destination for the local community. To begin with, the park has high solar exposure throughout the year since most of the buildings to the south are 3-4 storey. The surrounding area is rich in cultural heritage (some buildings dating back over 100 years) and there exists the potential for high use throughout the year because of dense and diverse neighborhood. The park is fairly open to the street and has several entry points to promote easy access. The off leash dog area generally increases the sense of community and social interaction among neighbours. Open green space is available for unprogrammed activities. The park comes to life when the farmers market is set up (every Saturday from June 17th to
October 7th. Trees, (particularly those over 50 years old) increase biodiversity and habitat in the park.

4.6.2 Challenges

Nelson Park faces several contextual challenges which tend to deter desirable user groups from spending time in the park. To begin with, the park is in close proximity to facilities which cater to at risk people: liquor store (Bute and Davie St), Dusk to Dawn, mentally ill patients from Saint Paul’s Hospital. The park’s sense of openness and proximity to a high traffic street (Thurlow) dilute the pleasurable experience of being in a green oasis separate from the city. Several bermed areas within the park contribute to significant drainage problems. The only major open green space is used primarily for dogs thereby creating user conflicts amongst dog owners and those without dogs.

These opportunities and constraints will be taken into account in the redesign of Nelson Park.

4.7 Site Inventory and Analysis

4.7.1 Vegetation

In 1987 the planting design for Nelson Park included Horse chestnut, pear, fir, maple, mountain ash, Fraxinus, Pinus, Quercus, Fagus sylvatica and Prunus. There are currently no shrubs on the site. The deciduous trees provide beautiful fall color and there are several old trees such as big leaf maples which visibly attract a high number of birds.
4.7.2 Hydrology and Topography

Although it has been suggested that a stream or several tributaries once passed through the site, the book titled Lost Streams of The Lower Fraser River shows that no major stream ran through Nelson Park.

Nelson Park’s topography ranges from 41.4m to 45.4m above sea level (difference of 4m). A majority of the site slopes towards the south and several berms trap the water and cause it to pool in certain areas. The hydrology map (refer to figure 25) indicates the flow of water across the site.

The highlighted area in black demonstrates where the highest amount of pooling generally occurs after a heavy rainfall.
These findings imply that up to a third of the park is so poorly drained that users aren’t able to enjoy these spaces particularly from October to May (when Vancouver receives the most rainfall). As a result, drainage conditions must be addressed in the redesign of Nelson Park.

4.7.3 Exposure and Views

There are no major views within the park itself besides that of the heritage houses. However, due to the Vancouver’s grid layout, there are beautiful views of the city, mountains and ocean from Thurlow and Bute Street.
4.7.4 Night lighting

There are several light poles in Nelson Park which provide some lighting along the main pathways. On one hand, it's beneficial not to have too much lighting in the park throughout the year because it encourages people to use the park at night (thereby potentially increasing the probability of illegal activities being performed in the park). However, it also overlooks the opportunity to use the space for events such as night markets that can help to bring the community together. These ideas will be further elaborated upon in the design section of this paper.

4.8 Questionnaires

A Vancouver landscape architecture firm, Perry and Associates, was commissioned to study Nelson Park in 2004-5 in order to gather information for its redesign. During public meetings, the firm composed a questionnaire that was filled in by the public in 2004. Although not all the user groups were equally represented, it nevertheless provides useful information about the public's concerns with Nelson Park (refer to appendix 1).

Table 3 describes some of the common themes and issues mentioned by the public.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major issues</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Possible Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Off leach dogs</td>
<td>-High number of dog owners living in the vicinity -One of the few off leach dog parks in West End (the nearest dog park is at Sunset beach)</td>
<td>-Fenced/vegetated boundary for off leach dogs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) **Safety**

- Drug users shoot up in Park and field house ("weekend crackhouse") and leave needles in the park
- Drug dealing - Bottle depot at Bute is a crystal meth market
- Fights and muggings have occurred in the Park (frequency unknown)
- Close proximity to facilities that care for drug addicts, homeless, at risk youths (St Paul's Hospital, Dawn to Dusk, Dr Peter's center, liquor store just off of Davie on Bute street)
- Current park layout has some private, slightly hidden spaces, blocked views (berms, evergreen trees, field house) and very little nighttime lighting. As a result, people can perform illegal activity without being easily seen.
- The park isn't heavily used enough and doesn't seem to have a sense of ownership. As a result, this kind of criminal activity is more prevalent.
- Address use and maintenance of field house (either find ways to make it's use safer or remove it)
- Ways to help care for disadvantaged/high risk people so that they're not just been displaced into other neighborhoods
- Environmental design that finds ways to make the park feel safer and open
- Increase use of park and community involvement
- Policing to reduce undesirable behavior?

3) **Playground/park relationship**

- Restricted access to families during school hours
- Playground equipment doesn’t cater to toddlers
- Very secluded from rest of park (fenced off for safety reasons)
- Playground (school property) and park area segregated
- Increase year round play space for children (make sure the space can be easily monitored by parents and teachers)
- Some activities might need to be separated from school children users and other users

4) **Access**

- From Bute and Nelson (was supposedly a safer school yard when neighbors could cross through)
- Uneven path unsafe for people with mobility impairments (i.e. seniors)
- Wheelchair access not sufficient (i.e. park layout)
- Research appropriate surface materials and most suitable circulation routes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6) Lack of programming and activities:</th>
<th>7) Lack of facilities/structures/maintenance</th>
<th>8) Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Park doesn’t cater to needs of most user groups</td>
<td>- Lack of adequate funding</td>
<td>- Nelson Park is surrounded by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for teens? (desire to feel as though away from adult supervision).</td>
<td>- Lack of programming is currently more of a concern due to increase in number of user groups living close to the park as well as an increase in families living in the West End</td>
<td>- Program activities that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs of families?</td>
<td>- Conflict over choosing the most appropriate facilities/services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors area?</td>
<td>- Include the facilities which cater to most of the user groups but do so in a pragmatic, sensitive and creative manner. Make sure to design the facilities so that they connect to one another and the surrounding environment to create a unified park.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate size sports field?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High demand for community gardens (3 by 6 feet plots for 33 residents at Mole Hill with a wait list of over 60 people, therefore demand far exceeds supply)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate more local designers into farmers market?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing garden for hospital, Dr Peter’s Center?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to increase amount of social space i.e. conversational seating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Park is the backyards of many residents and sounds travels very easily, therefore need to program activities that are less disruptive or at least those that do not disturb the neighborhood at night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9) Poor connections to surrounding neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Necessary to redesign the Park so that connections to Mole Hill, Davie street and other neighborhoods are enhanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The history of the area needs to be celebrated (i.e. heritage homes that are over 100 years old surround the park)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the parks responsibility to its neighborhood and the city of Vancouver?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What feature(s) unifies the park?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10) Underused space and poorly defined entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity concentrated in a few areas (circular grass area and playground)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underused space along the edges and sides of the park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor sense of entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential to close off Comox street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | buildings on all sides, and is quite an enclosed space |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| residents live right along the periphery of the park |
| don’t disturb the residents at night (exception during special events/festivals) |

| | Park design (doesn’t feel welcoming to people walking by) |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| Address these issues through the redesign of the park |

| | Park layout |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| -Ways to bring the edges to life (cafes etc.) |
| -Extend the park across one of the streets (i.e. Comox St.) |
| -The redesign of the park must consider the kinds of activities that take place throughout the park so that all the spaces are used to its full potential |

Table 3 Major Issues in Nelson Park

### 4.9 Direct Observations

#### 4.9.1 Pedestrian Circulation

On Wednesday December 14, 2005 I visited the site at peak hours, (9am and 3:30pm) to observe the number, approximate age and gender of park users and wanted to determine which paths and areas were used most frequently. Although these observations
were made during only two specific times of the day, similar conclusions were drawn from numerous site visits that were made at the end of summer, fall and winter.

Figure 47 Frequency of Paths Used at Nelson Park During Peak Hours
(The Thicker Lines Represent Higher Frequency of Use)

It was found that the path cutting across the site was used frequently by both genders and by a higher percentage of young to middle age adult pedestrians. This path was used mainly as a short cut since few actually remained in the park. From 3:30-4pm, 13 young adult females (majority of Asian decent), 17 young adult males, 7 middle aged females, 8 middle aged males, 1 male cyclist and one mother with two children (total 49 people) crossed this path. There were very few elderly people present at the observed times. The second highly used path was along Thurlow St (refer to red path on map). The other paths were used comparatively infrequently.

Besides the school playground, the only space that was frequently used by the public for a relatively long duration of time was the circular area in green. At 4pm, this space was crowded with off leash dogs (10 dogs at one point) and their owners, socializing amongst themselves. These observations demonstrate that a large percentage of the park is underused during the winter.

Overall, several assumptions can be drawn from these observations:

- Women appear to feel safe walking across the park (at least at peak hours and during the day) but it appears that men feel more relaxed spending longer durations of time in the park. There were only two women out of
the 10 dog owners that used the main off leash dog space. One reason might simply be that women feel more threatened being in the same space as undesirables (i.e. homeless and drug users).

- Even though there's a retirement home next the park, there were noticeably few elderly people walking along the paths or sitting in the park.
- There were few parents and children using the park (besides the playground)
- The corner of Nelson and Thurlow is a particularly important node with high activity and that if well designed could attract an even high number of visitors.

4.9.2 Zones Within Nelson Park

Nelson Park was broken down into 10 zones in order to simplify the results of multiple site visits. These zones describe relevant observations and locations of social and antisocial behavior.

Zone 1: Entrances
Bute/Comox entrance and Nelson/Thurlow entrance are used frequently throughout the day. Interviews with local users disclosed out that these areas were used for drug dealing although these behaviors were not actually observed.

Zone 2: Fieldhouse
As previously mentioned, this building has been used as a place to shoot up and perform other illegal activities.

Zone 3: Poor Drainage
This area contains some of the worst drainage on the site and is used very little by the public.

Zone 4: Dog Park
This area is used mainly by off leash dogs.

Zone 5: Thurlow
This space is used for passive recreation such as eating lunch or relaxing on the grass or bench.
Zone 6: Neglected
Although this space is used as a place to sunbathe in the summer, it doesn’t appear to be used at other times of the year.

Zone 7: Center
Evergreens limit views of the park.

Zone 8: Parking Lot
This space is the parking lot for the staff at Lord Roberts Annex School. Locals are not allowed to park in these spaces.

Zone 9: School Playground
This space is used mainly during recess (except for the space pointed out of the map). As previously mentioned, this space cannot be used by other children and families during school hours.

Zone 10: School
Lord Roberts Annex School.

Although homeless, drug addicts and/or street kids can be found throughout the park, it appears that when in groups, undesirables prefer and feel comfortable hanging out in more public, higher use areas such as along major paths. When by themselves, undesirables tend to hang out on the periphery and away from major paths. Drug dealers on the other hand, tend to prefer higher use areas such as entrances since they are trying to find customers who will purchase their drugs.
Old maple trees
Place where people sell used items (along Bute and on grassy areas)
Supposed drug dealings
Drug usage/undesirables hang out
Undesirables hang out
Low use area
Common location to people watch (especially for elderly)
Poorest drainage in the park
Farmers market along Comox Street
Pathway entrance to Mole Hill and Pendrell Street
Parking lot where kids have tried to play badminton
Needles found on a regular basis
Popular sunbathing spot
Undesirable hangout
Blocked views
Gathering place for off leash dogs (drainage problems)
Undesirables/desirables (where hospital staff have lunch)
Supposed drug dealings and muggings
4.9.3 Interviews with Public

Although the questionnaires highlighted that safety was an important issue that needed to be addressed, it was still unclear whether users simply perceived the park as unsafe or whether events actually took place which made the park feel unsafe. Interviews conducted in the park with regular users provided answers to this question.

12 people were approached in the park where an informal interview took place in the morning of December 28th and January 15th. They were informed that I was a UBC student doing a project on Nelson Park. Questions such as what they thought were the main problems with the park (if any) and how long they have been using the park were asked (refer to appendix for further information).

The interviews concluded that the major reason local users don’t spend prolonged periods of time in the park is because it is frequented by drug users and homeless youths. Users simply don’t feel safe using the space. Lack of activities was another reason why people didn’t enjoy spending time in the park. One interviewee mentioned that “if you don’t have a dog, there’s nothing to do in the park.
4.9.4 Conclusions from Objective, Observational and Anecdotal Data

Nelson Park is a space that’s clearly visible from the surrounding streets with few obstructed views. At certain times of the year (particularly in the summer), the park is crowded with a number of local user groups such as dog owners and undesirables. Nevertheless, several legitimate users, particularly the elderly, families and women, don’t feel comfortable spending prolonged periods of time in the park because it is frequented by homeless people, drug addicts and street youths.

Interviews with park users disclosed that Nelson Park is nicknamed Meth Park (referring to methamphetamine) because of the relatively high number of drug addicts occupying spaces in the park. Employees from Vancouver Coastal Health Authority carry out needle sweeps in the park and collected approximately three needles per month from December to March of 2006 (interview with Vancouver Coastal Health Authority). The retirement home’s semi enclosed garden space on the ground floor directly adjacent to the park, finds an average of 6-12 needles a week during the summer. Although police frequently monitor the area, illegal activities continue to thrive in broad daylight. Muggings have also been reported and have occurred in broad daylight and gangs of drug dealers have been known to hang out at the entryways. To add to the fear of Nelson Park, rumors of a past rape in the park have instilled fright in the eyes of many community members.

It is clear from the above research that Nelson Park is a very complex site. The design proposal can not resolve underlying issues of homelessness and drug addiction as they go beyond the scope of this project. However, there exists the potential to improve security thereby reducing user conflicts. Deterring undesirables such as drug addicts and criminals (who actually pose a threat to the public) may be possible through the redesign of Nelson Park. The following design section describes how this can be achieved.
5 Proposed Design

5.1 Concept
The design proposal for Nelson Park arises out of the need to improve the public's sense of security. The park is a popular destination for some local user groups in the summer. However, for the remainder of the year, it's used very infrequently. Bringing the edges to life creates a more inviting transition from the street so that it's sometimes hard to tell where the park ends or begins. Spaces will be designed along the edge to cater to those who don't feel comfortable spending time inside the park. Increasing positive uses/activities along the periphery will increase eyes within the park and thus promote use throughout the park. An increase in use will help promote a sense of community and increase the sense of security within the park. As a result, people will feel more comfortable being in a space where there are people like themselves present.

Figure 50 Concept Diagram
5.2 Project Goals

The primary goal of this project is to address user problems facing Nelson Park and offer design concepts and solutions for their resolution. Through direct observation, interviews with local users, literature research and analysis, this study hopes to determine why the park is failing to serve the needs of the local community. A park redesign will help to resolve user conflicts and strive to find ways to discourage drug use and crime within the park. Public concerns will be addressed through a design that increases one’s sense of security, comfort, active and passive engagement, and discovery within the park.

5.3 Project Objectives

This project attempts to achieve the following:

- Create multi-functional, public spaces that are designed and managed to address the needs of a diverse array of user groups.
- Enhance and celebrate the distinct identity and history of the West End.
- Design and program spaces that are richly embedded in its context.
- Promote community interaction and increase the park’s sense of place.

5.4 Design Objectives

5.4.1 Improve Security and Safety

An increase in sense of security in Nelson Park will be achieved by:

- Attracting legitimate user groups through an increase in positive activities throughout the year and at different times of the day (especially in underused areas and along the periphery of the park).
- Designing inviting entrances to attract legitimate users
- Removing undesirable structures such as the field house (a common place for drug use)
- Removing any obstructions, such as evergreens, which limit views in the park.
- Improving night lighting in specific areas of the park
5.4.2 Reduce User Conflicts Within the Park

User conflicts will be addressed in the following ways:

- Designating an area for off-leash dogs so that other unprogrammed activities can take place in the remaining open spaces.
- Increasing seating in the park so that one group cannot dominate an area.
- Designing a public playground and outdoor sports court so that children and families have access during school hours.

5.4.3 Improve Maintenance and Facilities in the Park

Maintenance and facilities will be addressed by:

- Providing access to public washrooms in the Garden Café
- Improving drainage conditions within the park by incorporating a dry stream bed
- Providing an increase in formal and informal seating

5.4.4 Enhance Nelson Park’s Connections with Surrounding Community

Nelson Park can form stronger ties with the surrounding community by:

- Connecting the path that from Mole Hill to Nelson Park through the design of the main gathering space.
- Programming spaces that promote increased use from people in surrounding facilities (i.e. Lord Roberts Annex School and retirement home).

5.5 Methodology

The following steps were used to determine the criteria for the redesign of Nelson Park:

- Literature and precedent search that focused on:
  - Safety in urban parks
  - The making of successful public spaces
  - How community gardens can bring community pride and ownership into
the Park

- Contextual Analysis:
  - History and importance of the public park
  - History of the West End and Nelson Park
  - West End and Nelson Park demographics
  - Neighborhood opportunities and constraints

- Site Inventory Analysis:
  - Facilities in and around the park
  - Vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle access
  - Analysis of biophysical features of the area-vegetation, hydrology, topography, soils, views, exposure and character

- Objective Data:
  - Results of questionnaires from Perry and Associates, Landscape Architects who studied the park under a contract from the Vancouver Parks Board
  - Direct field observations: pedestrian circulation, zones
  - Anecdotal conversations: interviews with public

- Development of a detailed design (refer to flow chart on page 4)
**Problem statement:** The main challenges facing Nelson Park are the user conflicts and a lack of sense of security.

**Methodology:**
- Site analysis (including objective data, interviews with park users)
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Precedent studies
- Literature review

**Goals and Objectives:**
- Improve the sense of security
- Reduce user conflicts
- Enhance park connections to surrounding community
- Improve maintenance and Park facilities

**Design Strategies**

**Figure 51 Flow Chart**
5.6 Landscape Plan

The landscape plan introduces several new elements which address the goals of the design.

Community gardens and seating areas line some of the edges of the park thus promoting activities on the periphery. The entrances at three corners of the park were redesigned with the intention of attracting and enticing users to enter the park. The main gathering space, garden café, public playground, grass area for active recreation, and area designated for off leash dogs, offer a variety of spaces for programmed...
activities. Each space within Nelson Park will be elaborated upon in the following section.

6 Design Goals and Strategies

6.1 Goal 1: Enhance park connections with Lord Roberts Annex School and surrounding community

Strategy 1: Design physical and social connections between park and surrounding community

Currently the only program connections within the park are with Lord Roberts Annex School and the school playground, with the remainder of the park being used as an off leash dog area. The school is physically fenced off and has no connections to the remainder of the park.

Figure 54 Current Programming Connections in Nelson Park
With the redesign of Nelson Park, many connections will be enhanced. Lord Roberts annex school will not only have the school playground as a place for play but the public playground and dry stream bed could also be used for added enjoyment and discovery. The community garden could be used as a valuable educational resource for children from Lord Roberts Annex School as well as children from other local child care facilities. Children would also greatly benefit from the main gathering space where outdoor activities and performances could take place.

The arbour and dry stream bed surrounding the main gathering space is designed to connect to the arbour entrance, path and stream bed that currently runs through Mole hill (refer to figure 59). This path extension helps to draw people into the park and relates to the existing features within Mole Hill.

All of the spaces have been designed and programmed to meet the needs of the surrounding community. Each space will be discussed in further detail in the following sections.
6.2 Goal 2: Improve maintenance and park facilities

Strategy 1: Remove field house and provide access to public washrooms in the Garden Cafe

The field house will be removed because illegal activities have been known to occur and public washrooms will be provided in the Garden Cafe (refer to section 6.8.3 for more detail)

6.3 Goal 2: Improve maintenance and park facilities

Strategy 2: Improve drainage conditions in the park

A drainage plan is proposed for the redesign of Nelson Park. This will help to prevent water from pooling in areas with poor drainage and allow users to enjoy the entire park throughout the year.

Figure 60 Drainage Plan
A dry stream bed running along the length of the southern community garden and along the main gathering space is proposed. As opposed to an engineered drainage system where water flows directly into the municipal storm drains, the dry stream bed can act as an effective infiltration system. This 1 foot deep dry stream bed reduces surface runoff by acting as a water retention system and allowing water to infiltrate slowly into the ground. Not only would this system adequately address drainage problems in the park but it would also provide a flexible and manipulable setting for play and learning. The dry bed stream also acts as an educational resource to teach children about hydrological cycle. Vegetation could be established along the dry stream bed and the concrete seating wall would provide ample seating for all user groups.

Figure 61 Perspective of Dry Stream Bed

Figure 62 Dry Stream Bed Detail
6.4 **Goal 2**: Improve maintenance and park facilities

**Strategy 3**: Provide an increase in formal and informal seating

Informal and formal seating can be found throughout the park. The seating wall, stairs around the main gathering space, benches under the arbour, along the periphery and within the park provide formal and informal seating for the public. The high number of seating areas help to prevent one group from taking over all of the seats.

![Diagram of a park with various seating areas.](image)

Figure 63 Section/Elevation 4

6.5 **Goal 3**: Improve the sense of security

**Strategy 1**: Remove visual barriers and improve night visibility
The redesign proposes to remove the large cedars which limit views in and out of the park. Users will feel safer walking through a park when they are able to visually scan the area to detect any possible signs of danger.

Night visibility will be improved by increasing lighting around the main gathering space. This would allow the space to be used in the evening for markets and or live performances, at certain times of the year. The sense of security would be improved in this area, particularly at a time when the park would normally feel unsafe and unfriendly. Lighting for the remainder of the park would be kept to a minimum to discourage undesirable night use.
The light fixtures that are proposed (other than the arbour light fixtures), mimic the design of a light fixture that is currently in Mole Hill.

**Figure 66 Light Fixture in Mole Hill**

- Acrylic plastic
  - (same pattern on all four sides)
  - Aluminum frame
- Steel poles with prefinished baked on enamel paint
- Anchor bolts (mount as specified by manufacturer)
- Reinforced concrete foundation

*Figure 67 Light Fixture Detail*

- Steel longitudinal beams bolted in place
- Steel crossbeams welded in place
- Custom made cast iron posts
  - (same pattern on all sides)
  - Bolted into concrete base
- Ground lighting
  - At concrete base
- Reinforced concrete footing

*Figure 68 Arbor Light Fixture Detail*
Vines such as clematis armandii and vitis labrusca will bring the arbour to life.
6.6 Goal 3: Improve the sense of security

Strategy 2: Design inviting entrances

6.6.1 Mosaic Entrance

Mosaic tiles that spill out from the entrance on the corner of Thurlow and Nelson Street are intended to connect the street to the park, helping to draw people into the space. It is proposed that the mosaic tiles be designed and installed by youths and other local interested parties. These art pieces could be related to the history of the place and help to foster a sense of community pride and ownership.

Drug dealers have been known to sell drugs at the entrances of the park. Currently, benches at the corner Thurlow and Nelson Street entice drug dealers to spend prolonged periods of time at this entrance. Therefore, benches will not be provided at park entrances; the entrances will only function as short term stopping points for those accessing the park. This will help dissuade drug dealers from using these spaces, thus increasing the park’s sense of security.

Figure 72 Entrance at Thurlow and Nelson Street
6.6.2 The Kiosk Entrance

The redesign of the entrance at the corner of Thurlow and Comox Street is intended to attract users and promote activities in the park. The kiosk would provide information on events, passive and active recreation that are to take place as well as notify the public where and when dogs are permitted to be off leash. A granite wall with Nelson Park inscribed in it (approximately one foot in height with a rough, jagged surface) would inform the public which park they are entering and connect to the sitting wall that runs along the dry bed stream.
Figure 74 Plan View of Kiosk Entrance

Figure 75 Perspective of Kiosk Entrance
6.6.3 Orchard Entrance

The orchard entrance provides a structured, aesthetically appealing space that signifies the beginning of the orchard walk. These fruit trees tie into the underlying theme of how a landscape can be more than just an aesthetically appealing green space to escape from the concrete jungle of the city. It can function as a productive landscape which supports wildlife and humans.

6.7 Goal 3: Improve the sense of security

Strategy 3: Incorporate activities such as community gardens along the periphery of the park to attract legitimate users

6.7.1 Community Gardens

Incorporating community gardens in Nelson Park would benefit the public and increase the sense of security for several reasons. To begin with, community gardens are in high demand in the West End. There are at least 100 people on the waiting list for Mole Hill community gardens alone. The neglected edges of Nelson Park could be put to more socially, environmentally and economically productive use particularly in Vancouver where crops can grow all year long. The nearby, lower and middle income residences would benefit from the cost savings and potential employment. The local community, including children from Lord Roberts Annex School and other nearby child...
care facilities would greatly benefit by using these community gardens as an educational resource. For example, plants could be grown that produce natural dyes or seedpods that could be used in craft projects.

Community gardens are also flexible spaces that can be altered depending on needs. Involving the public (and even vandals or potential vandals) in caring for the garden plots would contribute to the public's sense of community, pride and ownership and could significantly reduce willful damage. Nelson Park's community gardens will also act as an extension from the Mole Hill community garden (in the lane south of Comox Street). These park garden plots can also act as a form of therapy particularly for patients from St Paul's hospital and Dr Peter's Centre. One's knowledge, motivation, confidence, satisfaction, physical coordination, development of fine motor skills and sense of empowerment are raised through the act of gardening. The garden plots would be managed and maintained by gardeners and therefore would require little attention by the Vancouver Parks Board. The community gardens would also be an excellent backdrop for the farmers market. Neighbors in the area who are unable or not interested in gardening but want to be involved in some way could donate time and skills (i.e through canning and /or watering) in return for a share of the crop. Lastly, community gardens provide habitat value and act as a sponge for rainwater absorption. This is highly desired in a park with few areas of habitat value and poor drainage conditions.

Designing community gardens along the park's edge in particular, would provide many benefits to the community. To begin with, positive users will be drawn to the park if they see people using the space. The proximity of the community gardens to the street sidewalks would stimulate social interaction amongst people walking by. The relatively high pedestrian traffic along the sidewalks of Nelson and Comox Street would help to deter mischievous behaviour. Residences that directly overlook the community gardens could keep a watchful eye on ongoing activities. Safe access to garden plots would be enhanced because of the traffic calming streets (speed bumps along Comox and Nelson Street). Interviews with park users confirmed that some elderly do not feel safe using the park primarily because of the presence of undesirables. In order to combat this unfortunate problem, community gardens were also placed across the street from the
retirement home. Elderly people would feel safer gardening in such close proximity to their residence where managers can keep a watchful eye from their office. Planting herbs and small shrubs with edible berries for the general public and installing a 1 meter high fence alongside the garden plots might reduce the desire to steal from the community gardens. Increasing activity by installing a community garden along some of the edges of Nelson Park would increase eyes on the park and positive uses throughout the year thereby increasing the sense of security.

Community gardens typically have a disorganized, chaotic appearance and generally do not cater to those with limited mobility. In order to address these common problems, 147 garden plots were designed to look aesthetically appealing and accommodate for those with limited mobility. The sinuous curves and alternating heights of the plastic containers add interest and cater to people of all ages and abilities. The plot dimensions (1 meter in width by 3 meters in length) and one meter compacted gravel paths enable a person in a wheelchair to access their plot.

Figure 77 Perspective of Community Gardens
Approximately 9 compost bins would be set up along the community garden.
6.8 Goal 3: Improve the sense of security

Strategy 4: Program spaces for passive and active recreation

6.8.1 Passive Recreation: Farmer's Market

A farmer's market currently runs every Saturday in the summertime along the edge of Nelson Park, on Comox Street (Comox Street is closed off for the event). When the weather is nice, people are sometimes found selling second hand items along Bute Street and in the park.

The design proposes to expand and move the market (62 stalls) to the multifunctional main gathering space. This would enable local residents to park in front of their residences when the farmers market is taking place. The new location would entice the public to enter the park instead of remaining on the periphery. Visibility from Thurlow Street would be
increased thus attracting more customers.
The market could sell products including arts and crafts, second hand goods and produce. The local community would benefit from becoming more involved in purchasing locally made products from the farmers market. Promoting a farmer’s market would bring life back into the park and increase the number of visitors, thereby increasing the sense of security in the Nelson Park.
6.8.2 Passive Recreation: Picnic Tables

Picnic tables with built in chess and checkers boards would be set up under the arbour. People could bring their own chess and checkers pieces for set up and the surface could also be used for the farmer’s market and picnics.

6.8.3 Passive Recreation: Garden Cafe

A garden cafe is proposed on the corner of Comox and Bute Street. This cafe would provide the opportunity to increase the number of users throughout the day and into the evening thus adding to the sense of security of the park. Nelson Park’s cafe could benefit the community in a number of ways. To begin with, the garden cafe could regularly donate a percentage of its gross sales to community projects such as meals on wheels programs that donates food to the disadvantaged. Parents could sit and have a coffee while monitoring their children in the nearby public playground. Public washrooms are also a necessity in Nelson Park. The cafe would be an appropriate location for the washroom facilities because the cafe would function as a highly active area of the park thus discouraging illegal activity. Similar to the public washrooms in Victory Square (refer to precedent studies), staff could monitor the toilets throughout the day. The cafe would provide a storage space for tools and equipment for the community garden. The building itself would be designed to fit with the heritage style residences that surround the neighborhood. The garden cafe also has the potential to be used as a space for events such as community meetings and local art exhibits.

6.8.4 Active Recreation: Grass Area

Active recreation is promoted by the removal of several berms east of the park and the reduction in the size of the school parking lot. The school parking lot was
relocated in front of the school, along Nelson Street. Activities such as a grass volleyball, badminton, shuffleboard, bacci and horseshoes could be set up along this grassy area. Elderly people in particular could greatly benefit from using this space for active recreation since the retirement home doesn’t provide these types of outdoor activities. Managers from the retirement home could also monitor the area from their office located in the retirement home.

6.8.5 Active Recreation: Main Gathering Space

The main gathering space is designed to serve multiple functions. The rubber floor provides an ideal surface to play sports such as basketball or ball hockey. The red tiles outline the location of the market stalls and stage setup. A basketball court is set up in the center of the space. The stairs that surround the space help to keep balls in the space and provide ample seating.
Figure 87 Section/Elevation 2: Main Gathering Space

Figure 88 Section/Elevation 2: Main Gathering Space

Figure 89 Section/Elevation 2: Main Gathering Space
6.9 Goal 4: Reduce user conflicts among off leash dogs and other users and among school playground and park

**Strategy 1:** Incorporate a designated off leash dog area

6.9.1 Off leash dog area

Off leash dog parks are a great way to meet neighbours and other members of the community. Not only does it provide socialization and exercise for dogs and their owners but it helps to make dogs better members of their community. As a result, an off leash dog area was maintained at a designated area in Nelson Park. It is currently the most popular off leash dog area but differs in that dogs are only permitted off leash in this particular area and not the entire park. Off leash dogs will not be permitted anywhere else in the park. It is hoped that members of the community and the Park's Board would help to enforce these regulations so that users without dogs could freely enjoy other grass areas of the park.

6.10 Goal 4: Reduce user conflicts among off leash dogs and other users and among school playground and park

**Strategy 2:** Design a public playground in a more central location

In order to address the needs of families who do not have access to the school playground during school hours, a public playground has been proposed. The playground (composed of fibar) would wrap around the garden café and provide the necessary playground equipment and swings for active play.
7 Conclusion

Nelson Park has the potential to act as a gathering space to bring the community together, whether it’s through community gardening or spending time at the farmers market. However, higher usage particularly for children, families and the elderly, will not take place unless a sense of security is improved.

The redesign of Nelson Park has attempted to incorporate design strategies to decrease user conflicts, improve the sense of security and promote community connections. Designing inviting entrances, incorporating activities particularly along the periphery and programming spaces for active and passive recreation were used as methods of attracting legitimate users to Nelson Park. Although some antisocial behavior in urban parks is inevitable, the redesign of Nelson Park can improve the sense of security by attracting legitimate users. Legitimate users in turn feel safer when other legitimate users are present. These strategies will encourage people of all ages to use the park, thus promoting community connections and contributing to the success of Nelson Park.

8 Challenges

There are several potential challenges with the redesign of Nelson Park. To begin with, although the redesign chose the designated off leash dog area which is currently the most popular place for off leash dogs, it might still be difficult to prevent off leash dogs in other areas of the park without proper fencing. Nevertheless, it’s hoped that the public respects the regulations and understands the benefits to all users.

Measures were taken to help prevent theft from the community garden (fruit trees and shrubs with edible berries for the general public, fenced off area, easy surveillance from the street). However, the gardeners might need to accept that some theft will be inevitable.

Reducing drug use in Nelson Park is another challenge that goes beyond the scope of this project. An increase in legitimate users might not deter undesirables from
performing illegal activities in the park. Individuals with substance abuse problems require much more help than what a well designed park can provide.

The redesign has attempted to attract users throughout the year. Nevertheless, park use will still be weather dependent (with the exception of the Garden Café) and there will most likely be much fewer park users on rainy days.
9 References

E. Aird, "Old Neighborhood in West End facing the axe in a bureaucratic nightmare", The Vancouver Sun, B1, June 8 1995


Websites:

Community statistics census data. Website: http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/Census2001/WestEnd03.pdf#search='West%20end%20Vancouver%20population'

Family services of greater Vancouver, Dusk to Dawn. Website: http://www.fsgv.ca/programpages/youthservices/dusktodawn.html

Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates. Website: http://www.mvvainc.com/


Project for Public Spaces. Website: www.pps.org

St Paul’s hospital. Website: http://www.providencehealthcare.org/about_hr_stpauls_about.html


West End Community web pages. Website: http://city.vancouver.bc.ca/community_profiles/west_end/history.htm


Your local farmers market society website: http://www.eatlocal.org/
10 Appendix

10.1 Perry and Associates Questionnaire
The following are the results from the questionnaire which had 127 participants:

1. Do you live within 5-10 min walk of the park? 111 people responded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98 (88%)</td>
<td>7(6%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20-30</th>
<th>30-55</th>
<th>55+yrs</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Dog owner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 (32%)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. How often do you use Nelson Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never/no response</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Presence or absence of police in the existing field house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence</th>
<th>Absence</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Alternative use for field house (question largely not understood)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes/suggestion</th>
<th>No suggestion</th>
<th>Non response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Play equipment north or south (question largely not understood)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Other local</th>
<th>Keep as is</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Teachers parking lot location (not understood)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval of current local</th>
<th>Re/move it</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Hard surface activity ie. skateboarding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 (27%)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Access from corner of Nelson and Bute through school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. What do you enjoy most about the park?
Responses have been grouped into 5 categories:

a) **Social Interaction**
- Seeing kids playing
- Farmer’s market
- Animals, entertaining watching dogs play
- Gathering place for moms and tots
- There already exists a sense of community mainly from dog owners getting to know each other

b) **Nature**
- Old trees (especially when flowering)
- Fairly large open space
- Tranquility, peace
- Lack of organization and development, informal
- Place to picnic (closest green space from commercially dense area of Davie Street)
- Place to watch wildlife (birds)
- Place to sun tan and cool down under trees from hot apartments (i.e. seniors building)
- Enjoy sitting on the berms

c) **History**
- Heritage atmosphere surrounding the park

d) **Connection**
- Proximity to surrounding neighborhood
- Path from west to east (place to cut across)

e) **Passive and active recreation**
- Enjoy walking along the circular paths, throwing the frisbee
- Place to practice music
• Used as a backyard since many residences don’t have one

10.2 Interviews with Park Users (Dec 28th and January 15th, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON INTERVIEWED</th>
<th>RANKING OF MAJOR PROBLEMS</th>
<th>OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION/OBSERVATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Middle aged man | Nothing to do in the park | -Park used to be a marsh and that the wettest area ran parallel to Comox Street  
-There’s a very high demand for community gardens with approximately 175 people on the waiting list  
- He used to gorilla garden before the community garden was put in place in Mole Hill  
that there’s frequently second hand markets set up along Bute Street where young Asians are found selling their items before going back to China  
- He was asked if there were problems with people stealing vegetables from the community garden and responded that it rarely happened and that in any case the best solution would be to plant other edible berry bushes or fruit trees that were public.  
- He notices staff from the hospital eating lunch close to berms  
- The field house shouldn’t be torn down because people need a place to go the washroom. He’s noticed people relieving themselves on other people’s gardens since the washrooms are only open at certain times of the year.  
-Suggested having a water feature so that people have a reason to come to the park |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Two middle aged homeless people (a woman and a man)</th>
<th>- The Parks Board: They have done enough damage over the years by removing trees and shrubs. - They were under the impression that the park was going to be fenced up and turned into a dog park.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Several</td>
<td>- Felt that the best way to celebrate the heritage of the area was to attract visitors who appreciate the heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Daily use—especially when the weather is nice</td>
<td>- They were clearly not comfortable speaking with me and as a result, the conversation was brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Laying on the grass</td>
<td>- Stay in the park until the police scare them off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Clean up after people especially before the children use the park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Want the park to be left alone so that they can be left alone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Two middle aged males (one was having an alcoholic beverage)</th>
<th>- Drugs, homeless youths using the park and the fact that it's a big crystal meth hangout - Maintenance (garbage left in the park)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Over 15 years</td>
<td>- ESL students from YWCA visit the park in the summer and give out questionnaires related to learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Almost daily use</td>
<td>- The park gets very crowded in the summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Sitting on a bench by the popular off-leash dog area</td>
<td>- There used to be lots of shrubs but a woman was raped. As a result, the parks board cleared away a lot of the plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- One occasion a grandmother was walking with a child in the park. The child had no shoes on so he approached her to tell her it wasn't safe (needles have been found in the park)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- They clean up after people as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thought it was a great idea to use the field house as a police station</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Manager from retirement home</th>
<th>- Drugs and crime: Nelson Park's nickname is Meth Park (dope and meth gangs) Elderly women from the retirement home are too scared to walk alone to shoppers drugmart to pick up a prescription a few blocks away (on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) The person has been working there for about 3 years and also lived in the area 20 years ago</td>
<td>- The park used to have more old people using it and now there's a lot more young people in the park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Manager's office overlooks a significant portion of the</td>
<td>- Dope deals in the open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Has seen people playing football, running around the park, badminton, baseball, Frisbee and people sunbathing on the hill close to retirement home and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Handicapped and elderly have been mugged in broad daylight for a cell phone (possibly by young street kids)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Think that a skate park would bring more druggies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Drug addicts have entered the retirement home to find a place to shoot up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                                             | - 6-12 needles a week are found in the garden of the
park | Davie street) because too scared of getting robbed | retirement homes
---|---|---
| Lack of activities: If you don’t have a dog, there’s nothing to do. People can’t play basketball on school property, even on weekends (kids kicked out for playing badminton on empty parking lot) | - The entrance at the retirement home is used frequently as a turn around spot for vehicles. Elderly people have almost been hit because of this
| - Acoustics are really good in the park. You can hear everything. The chains on the basketball nets made too much noise and had to be taken down | - There used to be an injection site at the hospital
| - Car break ins occur approximately once a month in the ground level parking lot of the retirement home. The thieves sometimes only steal a few dollars which is enough to purchase crystal meth. | - Elderly people generally view the park from their window rather than walk in the park. They also sit in the corner by the home or by the water fountain.
| - Mugging 2pm in afternoon SE corner of park (in the past 10-15 years) there’s been at least 10 muggings in Nelson Park (police couldn’t confirm exact numbers) | - On their break, doctors and nurses sometimes jog around the park
| - Children no longer come by for trick or treating | - Sprinkler heads have been broken because they go off at night
| - Deyes: Come to clean up the needles | - Plants have being stolen and/or kicked over in front of retirement home
| - Concerned about where residents are supposed to park since when the farmers market is on every Saturday along Comox Street, residents aren’t permitted to park there. | 5. Two middle aged males and one middle aged female (male and female are blind)
a) Have been living in the neighborhood for many years
b) Regular use (place to walk
| - Drugs (Drug addicts, tweekers (meth users), transients and street youth) | - asked homeless person under bench if they could sit there and homeless person got angry and smeared jelly across the bench
| - Maintenance: drainage problems, garbage | - police know there are drug deals going on all the time but don’t do much about it
<p>| - Lack of facilities, not enough places to sit, off leash dog area should be fenced |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. 3 street youths (drinking alcohol, intoxicated)</th>
<th>(no comment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Not from Vancouver, move from place to place</td>
<td>- Commented that Vancouver used to have more places for them to sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Sitting on the bench by popular off leash dog area</td>
<td>- Very aggressive/dangerous dog roaming around</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>