

# REIMAGINE YOUR PARK

Engaging and activating orphaned greenspaces in the City of Vancouver

Semester in the City - Spring 2013  
Final Project Report

Submitted By:  
Aashika Shekhawat  
Maria Liguori  
Alouettee Werner  
Open Park | Moncton



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## Team Biographies | Reimagine YOUR Park

### Marla Liguori, Simon Fraser University



An East Van girl, born and raised, Marla brings a kind of determination, discipline, and passion to all of her undertakings. Attending Simon Fraser University, Marla is an Honors Communication student and a Minor in Dialogue, graduating this semester. She is a product of supportive friends and family who have never once tried to deter her from experiencing the world, her way. Marla strives to do something that “scares her every day.” This is one reason that she joined CityStudio, the other was to put herself into a new experience that was altogether different from traditional academics. Marla attended Eastern China Normal University in Shanghai to explore the world and gain an extensive understanding of Asian commerce. And she hasn’t stopped there. Marla has traveled through over 20 countries, including Lebanon, Argentina, Vietnam and Cambodia. Her passion for urban

interventions, improving city living and making Vancouver a more beautiful place for everyone to live is evident throughout the duration at CityStudio. Marla will forever strive to “imagine the unimaginable.” (Duane Elverum)

### Gian Paolo Mendoza, Simon Fraser University



GP is a fourth year political science student, graduating in June 2013 from Simon Fraser University. Already avid musician, cyclist, writer, photographer, and occasional sailor, he has discovered an uncanny flair for graphic design, dialogue, and public engagement through his time spent at CityStudio. Other things he wants to try his hand at include roasting his own coffee and making his own shoes. Some of his favorite interventions include public pianos, hidden brick wall USB drops, StreetPong, and giant rubber ducks floating down the River Thames. Not necessarily in that order.

**Alexandra Olivia Venner, University of British Columbia**

Reigning from Edmonton Alberta, Zanny (which is short for Alexandra) moved out West in 2008 to attend the University of British Columbia. Vancouver was an easy move for her since she could combine having a rich city life with mountain living. She has just completed her undergraduate degree graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. In the midst of searching for the next peak to ski in the backcountry or rock to boulder or climb, Zanny is an active volunteer with Vancouver Public Space Network. She is passionate about advocating, educating, and generating love for the public spaces that pertain in Vancouver and this non-profit, city-building organization was the fit for her. She is specifically inspired by how small urban interventions can turn into something BIG and enrich urban life.

**Aateka Shashank, Simon Fraser University**

Aateka Shashank is currently in her third year in the International Studies program at SFU where she is focusing on Economic and Environmental Development. However, Aateka believes that cities are the true arena to implementing the change that is envisioned in the international arena. She sees her work with City Studio as an exciting opportunity for her to take the macro-level knowledge she has gained from her studies and applying it at a micro-level within the city of Vancouver. She is excited to continue the work of her Reimagine YOUR Park team and will continue to advocate for engaging and vibrant green spaces in Vancouver.

## Press Release | Reimagine YOUR Park | April 10, 2013

You are invited...To Reimagine YOUR Park!

They are four university students from CityStudio with a vision: Aateka Shashank, Alexandra Venner, Gian-Paolo Mendoza and Marla Liguori are working towards enriching the Access to Nature Goal, as seen in the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, through the implementation of a pilot project on McAuley Park at the intersection of Kingsway and Fraser.

Collaborating with a local inventor and architect to design interactive seating, this project seeks to challenge people's perceptions of small green spaces within Vancouver, by enhancing and celebrating public space as an essential part of a vibrant City.

The project comprises of the installment of cubic seating in an existing central gathering space, which enhances the current park space, as well as a temporary public piano that seeks to both inspire and enable others to re-imagine other public spaces within the City.

"For a city, such small spaces are priceless, whatever the cost. They are built of a set of basics and they are right in front of our noses. If we will look." - William Whyte

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CityStudio Vancouver is an energetic hub of learning and leadership where students design and implement Greenest City projects. CityStudio is co-led by Duane Elverum (Emily Carr University of Art and Design) and Dr. Janet Moore (Simon Fraser University – Centre for Dialogue). The project is a collaboration of the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC), British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Langara College, Simon Fraser University (SFU), University of British Columbia (UBC) and Vancouver Community College (VCC). The project is supported by Vancouver's Campus City Collaborative (C3).

For more information please visit:

- [citystudiovancouver.com](http://citystudiovancouver.com)
- [@citystudiovan](https://twitter.com/citystudiovan)
- [facebook.com/CityStudioVancouver](https://facebook.com/CityStudioVancouver)

Or contact:

Lena Soots

CityStudio Coordinator

604.874.6401

[citystudiocoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:citystudiocoordinator@gmail.com)

## Project Summary | Reimagine YOUR Park

### **CityStudio**

CityStudio is an innovative collaboration between the City of Vancouver (CoV) and the city's six post-secondary institutions (BCIT, ECUAD, Langara, SFU, UBC, VCC), developed in conjunction with Mayor Gregor Robertson's ambitious 10-point plan for Vancouver to become the greenest city in the world by 2020. In the last 2 years, CityStudio has become an energetic hub of learning and leadership where students and faculty have contributed more than 30,000 hours of research, learning, and action towards putting projects on the ground to support Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan. The project is co-directed by Duane Elverum (Emily Carr University) and Dr. Janet Moore (SFU Centre for Dialogue).

### **Reimagine Your Park Project**

*Engaging and Activating Orphaned Greenspaces in the City of Vancouver*

The Reimagine Your Park Project is engaging with 'orphaned greenspace' within the City of Vancouver by piloting a revitalization at McAuley Park on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Orphaned greenspaces are small parcels of underutilized open space such as parks, street medians and streetscapes. The purpose of this project is to inspire and expand people's perceptions of the use of small-scale green space.

Our project manifests itself in the Mount Pleasant community at the intersection of Kingsway and Fraser at McAuley Park. The revitalization involves the installation of temporary and amenable park features, including sculptural seating, a central gathering space, and Vancouver's very first public piano.

Doing so our project successfully supports the 2020 Greenest City Action Plan by addressing the Access to Nature goal and the Green Transportation goal by creating a new vibrant neighborhood-scale public green space.

To help us 'reimagine' McAuley Park we have worked with the 13 businesses on the 15th Avenue commercial strip and the Dickens Community Group, who tend to the McAuley Park community garden. Our main contact has been Andrew Pask, a community planner. However, to help us put our project on the ground we have worked with Matthew Holm and Sarah Orchard, key staff members from the Streets and Engineering Departments at City of Vancouver.

## **Project Details | Reimagine YOUR Park**

### **Methodology**

The methodology pursued to undertake this project begins with the selection of the site for the project, finding City and community supporters for the project, determining the needs of the community, and the final selection and implementation of the intervention on the site.

**Site Selection** | The team selected McAuley Park through the results of the Orphaned Spaces mapping project. Choosing from spaces in one of Vancouver's top 5 park deficient neighborhoods, McAuley Park stood out to our team as a space with a dynamic community and one that showed potential to address this community's needs.

**Finding Stakeholders** | Throughout the project, the team sought guidance from Andrew Pask, a community planner for Grandview-Woodlands. With Andrew's advice we determined appropriate staff contacts in the Transportation and Streets departments within the City of Vancouver. The team also began conversations with the Dickens Community Group, a neighborhood association active in maintaining community and improving the safety of the area for over two decades.

**Community Conversations** | On March 12th, the team held a community consultation through a series of casual conversations with the 15th Avenue business owners at the local coffee shop, Matchstick Coffee Roasters. Through these conversations the team discovered that while the area had a vibrant community of businesses and clientele support, they were in severe need of space for the community to gather and engage in.

**Intervention Selection** | Resulting from the community consultation, the team created a 'Menu of Urban Interventions' [Appendix 1] and selected sculptural seating, a central gathering space, a temporary public piano and a landscape plan as our main interventions. These interventions would collectively increase the beauty of the space, create a more engaging park space and further the discussion on orphaned greenspaces at the City of Vancouver.

**Implementation** | Reimagine YOUR Park partnered with local designer and inventor, Kim Cooper, to design the colorful movable seating placed in front of the existing benches at the park. A central gathering space was installed by tiling a semi-circle area directly in front of the existing seating. Furthermore, a landscape plan, created by Anne Marie Whittaker and Amy Gore from Golder Associates, is being given to the City to continue building on the energy at McAuley Park. Finally, a temporary public piano was installed for a demonstration at McAuley Park on April 6th from 11AM to 1PM.

### **Project Outcomes and Impact**

On April 6<sup>th</sup> the community, family and friends gathered in McAuley Park to celebrate the park's beauty and vibrant history. Our team is proud to note that over 40 people

gathered at McAuley Park that day and actively engaged in dialogue over cups of coffee and shared attempts at playing the piano.

**Landscape Concept** | To increase the accessibility of the area, we collaborated with Anne-Marie Whittaker and Amy Gore, landscape architects from Golder Associates, to design a concept plan for pedestrian pathways to connect the businesses, bus stop and seating area to make the park more accessible [Appendix 2]. While this solution could not be physically constructed, the plans will be passed on to the appropriate City of Vancouver staff to continue the implementation of these pathways.

**Sculptural Seating** | To increase the friendliness of the area, we created a central gathering space in McAuley Park to allow for the installation of sculptural movable seating that would foster informal conversation and community-scale programming. We collaborated with Kim Cooper, local designer and inventor extraordinaire, to build the unique, interactive, sculptural seating arrangement. The seating is held together with a chain, which allows for the boxes to be moveable and interactive, and is grounded by two big planter boxes on either end.

**Public Piano** | To really ‘reimagine’ this space and to challenge people’s presumptions of the usage of public space in the city, we piloted Vancouver’s first public piano in McAuley Park on April 6th. The piano served the community’s prominent arts culture by providing an outlet for children, youth, and adults to explore musical creativity in a unique environment. At the same time, the conceptual space of McAuley Park challenges the presumptions of where a piano is traditionally enjoyed, by immersing it in the natural environment.

**Our Celebratory Event** | The event was more than just a celebration of the current usage of the space by the community; it was also a celebration of the history of transformation that McAuley Park has undertaken over the years. This event not only began the dialogue for a vibrant public space at McAuley Park, but also continued the discussion regarding the zoning of McAuley Park and the viability of revitalizing small park spaces in Mount Pleasant to address the park deficiency of the neighborhood.

**The Long Term Vision** | The team will continue this dialogue with the appropriate City of Vancouver departments to revitalize other orphaned greenspaces in the City. Using McAuley Park as an example and precedent for future work, the team will continue partnering with community groups to build on the energy at McAuley Park and weave its story into that of the entire neighborhood.

## **Key Challenges**

Although our project was beautifully designed with the community and the City in mind, we braved several challenges on our journey to successfully implementing the interventions we chose. One of our two biggest challenges was navigating our relationship and communication with City Staff. At several points, it was unclear with whom we were communicating and whether our project should be publicized widely across different departments of the City before the intervention plans were finalized.

Secondly, our selection process for what would be an appropriate intervention to place in McAuley Park given our short project timeframe was another challenge we encountered. It involved some tough choices and trade-offs regarding costs, resources and the timeframe required to install the interventions that had to be implemented. In order to solve this, we had to create mini budgets for each of the different interventions, determine their need within the community and the greater vision of the project, consider their stewardship options and also implement them within a month.

## **Current Project Status**

The sculptural seating, central gathering space and temporary public piano were installed and showcased on April 6th during the celebration event from 11am to 1pm. The landscape plans will be handed over to Matthew Holm from the Streets Department at the City of Vancouver to further the discussion regarding accessibility of the park space at McAuley.

Furthermore, while the piano stayed at McAuley for the celebrations on April 6th, it is currently the center of discussion while the team looks for ways of bringing back the piano to McAuley Park in a semi-permanent manner. The team will consider weatherproofing the piano, painting it with the community and partnering with more community initiatives to maintain and grow the public piano component.

## **Stewardship Plan**

Our stewardship component involves partnering with local businesses to take care of small maintenance tasks for the seating; namely the cleaning and care of the seating. However, the seating was designed in a way that requires minimal maintenance.

## Budget | Reimagine YOUR Park

<b>COMMUNITY CONSULTATION</b>	
Shipping materials for Community Consultation	\$18.45
100 to 150 cups for Community Consultation	\$8.75
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION EXPENSES (including tax)</b>	<b>\$27.15</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION</b>	
Kim Cooper Consulting - Designing & Building Fee	\$600
Landscape Architect - Mapping Monorail	\$100
Landscape - Establishment/Park Leaching Monorail	\$100
<b>TOTAL PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION FEES (excluding tax)</b>	<b>\$800.00</b>
<b>HARDWARE AND MATERIALS</b>	
Piano hire	\$0
Piano moving expenses	\$100
Customized Potted Plants above the Piano	\$53.95
Customized Potted Plants above the Piano etc.	\$7.85
Writing supplies - pens, lumber, nails, etc.	\$132.54
Writing supplies - pens, lumber, nails, etc.	\$47.46
Writing supplies - paint, lumber, nails, etc.	\$111.20
Writing supplies - shipping boxes	\$313.15
1 platters - Potentia & Me	\$45.12
<b>TOTAL HARDWARE/MATERIALS EXPENSES (including tax)</b>	<b>\$1006.04</b>
<b>SATURDAY EVENT DAY EXPENSES</b>	
Student Free Cookies	\$50
Custom logos, printing fee + 2 t-shirts	\$50
Black women's T-shirts	\$26.88
<b>TOTAL SATURDAY EVENT DAY EXPENSES (including tax)</b>	<b>\$126.88</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL EXPENSES (including tax)</b>	<b>\$1,964.03</b>
10% Contingency	\$196.40
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,060.23</b>

## Acknowledgments | Reimagine YOUR Park

### **THANK YOU!**

To the CityStudio for their support, inspiration and motivation:  
Duane Elverum, Janet Moore, Lena Soots, Sean Blenkinsop

To City of Vancouver staff for their energy, time and commitment:

Andrew Pask, Community Planner  
Sarah Orchard, Green Streets Coordinator  
Matthew Holm, Engineering Department

To the Dickens Community Group for their warm welcoming and open invitation to their space:

Peter Wohlwend, Stephanie Bogaert

To our designers and architects for their time and creativity:

Anne Marie Whitaker, Landscape Architect, Golder Associates  
Amy Gore, Landscape Architect, Golder Associates  
Kim Cooper, Contract Designer

## References | Reimagine YOUR Park

POLICY | Greenest City 2020 Action Plan

<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Greenest-city-action-plan.pdf>

POLICY | Transportation 2040, W1.1 & W2.2 and 2.3

<http://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/transportation-2040.aspx>

ARTICLE | All Placemaking is Creative: How a Shared Focus on Place Builds Vibrant Destinations

<http://www.pps.org/blog/placemaking-as-community-creativity-how-a-shared-focus-on-place-builds-vibrant-destinations/>

VIDEO | William Whyte: The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces

<http://vimeo.com/6821934>

ARTICLE | Actions in Public Space: Framing Lafayette Park

[http://engagingcities.com/article/actions-public-space-framing-lafayette-park?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=twitter&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Engagingcities+%28EngagingCities%29](http://engagingcities.com/article/actions-public-space-framing-lafayette-park?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Engagingcities+%28EngagingCities%29)

ARTICLE | Norquay Park: Community by Design

<http://spacing.ca/vancouver/2011/08/22/norquay-park-community-by-design-or-design-by-community/>

ARTICLE | Lack of Green Spaces? Pocket Parks are the Solution

[http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/node/133091?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=twitter&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+SustainableCitiesCollective-TwitterHandleFeed+%28Sustainable+Cities+Collective+-+Twitter+Handle+Feed%29](http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/node/133091?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+SustainableCitiesCollective-TwitterHandleFeed+%28Sustainable+Cities+Collective+-+Twitter+Handle+Feed%29)

TELL US...  
WHAT ELSE CAN YOU  
ENVISION HERE?

## MCAULEY PARK REVITALIZATION

Our team will be at Matchstick Coffee Roasters on **Tuesday, Mar. 12 from 11am to 4pm**: we invite you to come chat and have a coffee on us!

A FEW POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE...

POP-UP LIBRARY?

PUBLIC PIANO?

PUBLIC CHESS BOARD?

SEATING  
AND COMMUNAL AREAS?

# PARK FEATURES: IDEAS AND OPTIONS



A Menu of Urban Interventions ranging from short to long implementation timeframes.

## Public Piano

A free lockable piano for anyone to play; the keys could be stored at a business to lock it up after park hours are closed.



## Pop - Up Library

A community owned and maintained mini library brings a calming energy to the space where people can read a book while enjoying their coffee or food.



**Urban Intervention:** Interactive objects or elements that enhance a park, public, or street space.

## Public Chess Board

Play chess at McAuley after grabbing a coffee or a bite to eat! A business could be responsible for storing the chess pieces after the park is closed.



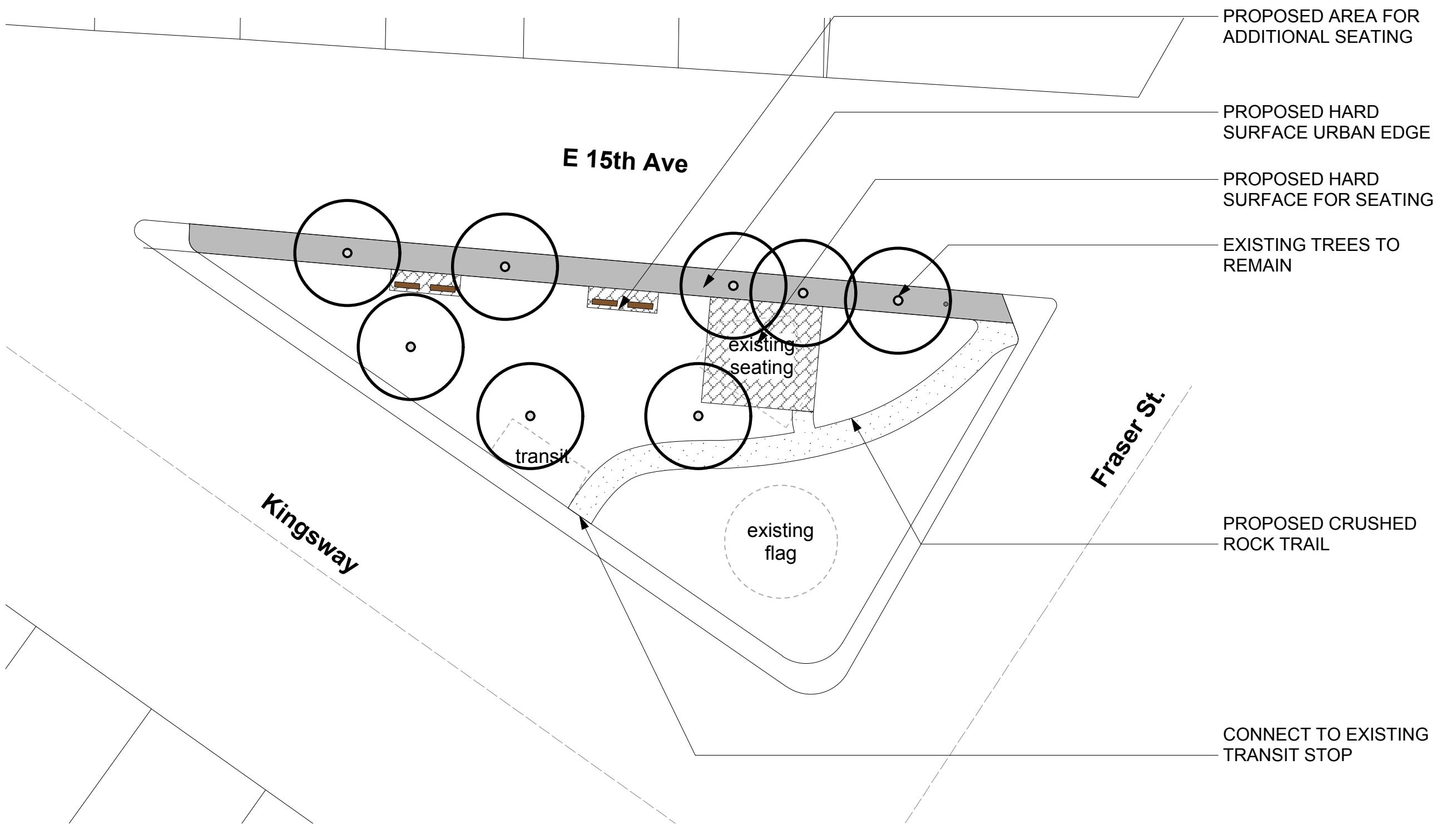
## Communal Seating

A seating arrangement that attracts people and creates an engaged space. The seating would be installed for the summer months.



**PLEASE CONTACT US AT:**

[reimagineyourpark@gmail.com](mailto:reimagineyourpark@gmail.com)  
778-887-2926 (ask for Zanny!)



**NOTES:**

Drawings for discussion with City of Vancouver only. NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION.

Base data drafted from Vanmap. All locations are approximate and to be confirmed by City of Vancouver

**REFERENCE**

Base data obtained from VanMap. To be confirmed by City of Vancouver Engineering.

PROJECT:  
**CITY STUDIO**

TITLE:

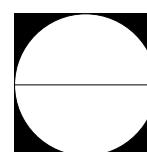
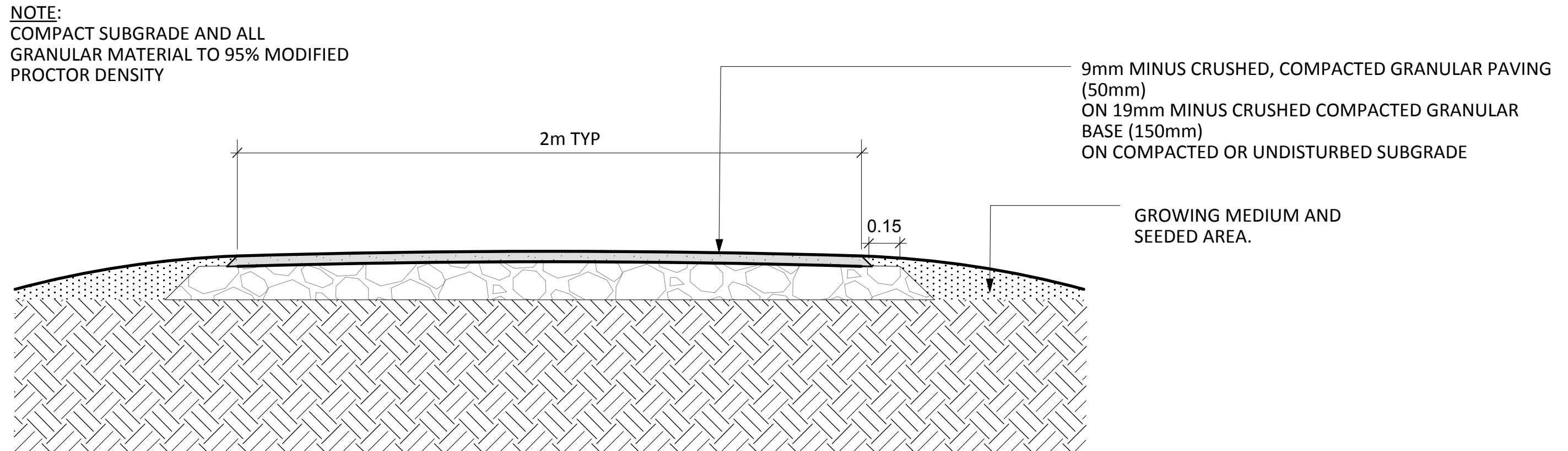
**PROPOSED LAYOUT - PUBLIC SEATING**

NOTES:

DATE: APRIL 3, 2013

SCALE: 1:500

FIGURE **A**



## Crushed Rock Trail

Scale: 1:20 metric

Detail

### NOTES:

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Base data drafted from Vanmap. All locations are approximate and to be confirmed by City of Vancouver

PROJECT:  
**CITY STUDIO**

TITLE:

**PROPOSED CRUSHED ROCK TRAIL**

NOTES:

DATE: APRIL 3, 2013

SCALE AS SHOWN

FIGURE **B**



INTERACTIVE ART?

HAMMOCKS?

SWING SET?

MONKEY BAR?

CHECK OUT OUR PLOT SITE LOCATION AT WICKESY PARK



CityStudio