

CALL FOR ARTISTS

La Vérendrye Park West Node Public Art Installation

Opening Date: September 14, 2024

Deadline for Submission: October 30, 2024

PROJECT OVERVIEW

La Compagnie de La Vérendrye, with the support of an Indigenous Advisory Committee, is seeking to commission a new site-specific public art installation for the West Node of La Vérendrye Park. This call is for artists who can demonstrate a strong connection to the Indigenous communities of Manitoba. Eligible Indigenous artists are invited to submit expressions of interest and qualifications for this call.

The commissioned artist will be selected through a two-step process. In Step One, artists will be shortlisted based on their qualifications and interviewed by the Selection Committee. In Step Two, the selected artist will create a detailed proposal based on conversations and feedback from the Indigenous-led Selection Committee.

BACKGROUND ON THE PROJECT SITE

La Vérendrye Park, created in 1938 in St. Boniface to commemorate the 200th anniversary of La Vérendrye's arrival at The Forks, is a green space on the edge of Taché Avenue and is next to the Promenade Taché and The Loop walking trails. La Compagnie de La Vérendrye, as a living history group and a stakeholder in the park, recognizes the significance of the park's role in initiating a dialogue about preserving Manitoba's francophone heritage and envisioning its future within a context of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

In late 2022, La Compagnie de La Vérendrye engaged ft3 Architecture Landscape Interior Design to collaborate with Narratives Inc. and an Indigenous Advisory Committee, comprised of local First Nation and Métis members, as well as community stakeholder and partner representatives, to develop a preliminary master plan. This master plan aims to celebrate and identify the rich heritage of the site, incorporating four directional nodes, each with a unique focus and purpose, to honour the vibrant history of the area. An important component of the Conceptual Master Plan is the West Node that serves as a powerful counterbalance to the existing large sculpture of La Vérendrye. The selected artist of this Call will be invited to put together a detailed proposal for this important node.

Interested Artists are recommended to review the attached appendices about La Vérendrye and the future developments of the park.

ARTWORK LOCATION

The artwork will be displayed at the West Node of La Vérendrye Park, a site rich with history and cultural significance. The project aims to create a striking contrast to the existing colonial statue of La Vérendrye, symbolizing a shift towards a more inclusive narrative that celebrates Indigenous resiliency, reclamation and truth. **See project location map on Page 2.**



OBJECTIVE

As part of this Call for Artists, an Indigenous Advisory Committee provided guidance on the overall stories and objectives that this space should hold. The objective is to create public art that supports Indigenous expression and embodies themes of resiliency and reclamation, and the acknowledgment of Indigenous voices and histories. The installation aims to:

- Recognize Indigenous communities' resistance and resilience;
- Symbolize the reclamation and celebration of Indigenous narratives, culture and land;
- Serve as a space for acknowledging the full historical context of La Vérendrye and his relationship with Indigenous Peoples;
- Promote an authentic understanding of the past and reconciliation, and a way forward for the future.

ESTIMATED PROJECT TIMELINE

Step One

- Call to Artists Issued: September 14, 2024
- Artist Submissions Due: October 30, 2024

Step Two

- Shortlisted artists interviewed and final artist identified: November 30, 2024
- Proposals due from final artist: February 28, 2025
- Artwork production: Summer 2025 (Funding Dependent)
- Artwork unveiling: To be Determined with Artist

STEP ONE

Artist Eligibility

This Call for Artists is open to all Indigenous artists who have a demonstrated connection to the Indigenous communities of Manitoba and a strong understanding of the history of the park.

SUBMISSION FORMAT

Artists are invited to respond to this Call by submitting a single PDF document. This PDF document must be labeled with the artist's name and the project title (LastName_FirstName_LaVerendryePark).

The PDF document must include the following:

- **Letter of Intent:** Maximum 2 pages (12-point font). Outline who you are, your artistic experience, ability, approach, and interest in this project, the site and the community. Highlight relevant experience, your understanding of the park's background and the themes you're interested in exploring.
- **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** Detail professional experience as an artist, past public art experience and other relevant information. If applying as a team, provide one CV per team member.
- **Connection to Local Communities:** Maximum 500 words (12-point font). Include detailed ways you are connected to the local Indigenous communities of Manitoba.
- **Examples of Previous Work:** Minimum of 5, maximum of 10 images of previous work. This can be any artwork that you believe is relevant to the submission. Provide a title and brief description of each work. If applying as a team, submit a total maximum of 10 images.
- **Self-Identification:** Provide a statement of self-identification of Indigenous identity, and describe your connection to your Indigenous community.
- **References:** Names and contact information (current email and phone number) for two references who can speak to your artistic experience.

Other notes for consideration:

- Implementation and construction of the project is dependent on funding.
- The Selection Committee will be led by Indigenous community members to ensure the authenticity and cultural integrity of the project.
- Artists may be required to provide references for their relations to their Indigenous community.
- Additional information about the park, its background and future developments have been attached as appendices to this document.

SUBMISSION DELIVERY AND DEADLINE

Submissions must be received by **October 30, 2024 at 11:59 PM CST**. Incomplete and/or late entries will not be accepted. Entries must be submitted digitally via email.

Please send your submissions to desireetheriault@narrativesinc.com.

For questions and requests for clarifications, please contact desireetheriault@narrativesinc.com. The final date for questions is **October 20, 2024**.

This call for artists represents a unique chance to contribute to the cultural and aesthetic landscape of La Vérendrye Park. We look forward to your submissions and the opportunity to celebrate Indigenous expression through this significant art installation.

FUTURE PROJECT PHASE – STEP TWO

The Selection Committee will review all submissions and select up to three (3) artists to be interviewed. One (1) artist will be selected and paid \$2,500 to work with the Selection Committee to produce a proposal and quote by February 28, 2025. This proposal will be used to seek funding for implementation and construction in the summer of 2025.

The selected artist will be given detailed project information, including deadlines, dates, site parameters, dimensions and location. The selected artist will create a detailed proposal, including a written artist statement, concept, a project budget, production and installation plan. Further details and deliverables will be provided at the outset of Step 2.

The final artist selected by the Selection Panel as the competition winner and approved by La Compagnie de La Vérendrye, will enter into a contract to create the final public artwork. **Please note that implementation of the artwork will be dependent on funding.**

APPENDICES

Background on La Vérendrye
Photos of the Site
Master Plan for the Future of the La Vérendrye Park

BACKGROUND ON LA VÉRENDRYE

Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye, born in 1685 in New France (present-day Canada), is recognized for his extensive explorations, particularly in the Great Lakes region and the areas that would later become the Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, as well as parts of the northern United States. Alongside his sons, he is credited with being the first European to explore much of this region. In the 1730s, La Vérendrye established a series of fur trading posts and forts in the Canadian West, including Fort Saint-Pierre (near present-day Winnipeg) and Fort La Reine (near present-day Portage la Prairie). These posts played a crucial role in expanding French influence and trade networks in the region (Berthelette, 2022). His explorations laid the groundwork for further European expansion and settlement in North America, and he is remembered as one of the most important figures in the early exploration of the Canadian West.

However, much of what has been documented and celebrated about La Vérendrye deserves revision and truth. While he is hailed as a pioneering French-Canadian explorer, his exploration efforts were driven by the goal of establishing and profiting from fur trade posts in modern-day Manitoba (Manitoba Historical Society Archives, 2009; Dictionary of Canadian Biography, n.d.). Although his primary focus was on economic gain, this focus inadvertently contributed to the assimilation of Indigenous Peoples into colonial culture through increased interaction and the establishment of trade networks.

Moreover, La Vérendrye was actively involved in the acquisition and sale of war captives traded with his Indigenous allies (Rushforth, 2012) – proof of his exploitation of Indigenous peoples, which is an aspect largely ignored in mainstream narratives. The practice of trading Indigenous slaves was pervasive in the fur trade industry at the time. La Vérendrye owned three slaves himself and facilitated the trading and exchange of Indigenous slaves, including the purchase of others for his family's benefit (Manitoba Historical Society Archives, 2009). This highlights the discriminatory perspective prevalent in New France, where slavery was predominantly imposed upon Indigenous peoples, reflecting an underlying belief in their inferiority compared to white settlers. The glorification of La Vérendrye in various cultural representations and educational materials reveals a pervasive denial and whitewashing of his involvement in the slave trade and his relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

“If there is to be reconciliation, first there must be truth.”

– Timothy B. Tyson

The story attributed to La Vérendrye deserves reflection and critical discourse not only through historical documentation but also through public monuments honouring La Vérendrye in one aspect of his character. As such, La Compagnie acknowledges the importance of introducing public art within La Vérendrye Park that speaks truths and portrays an alternative perspective of the French-Canadian figure, affording a counterbalance to the existing monument. Recognizing historical inaccuracies and rectifying them with truth represents just one avenue toward reconciling the injustices of the past. Moreover, it serves to honour the enduring resilience of strong Indigenous cultures and voices which persist despite the efforts to extinguish and silence them.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITE



Park Views



Existing Statue

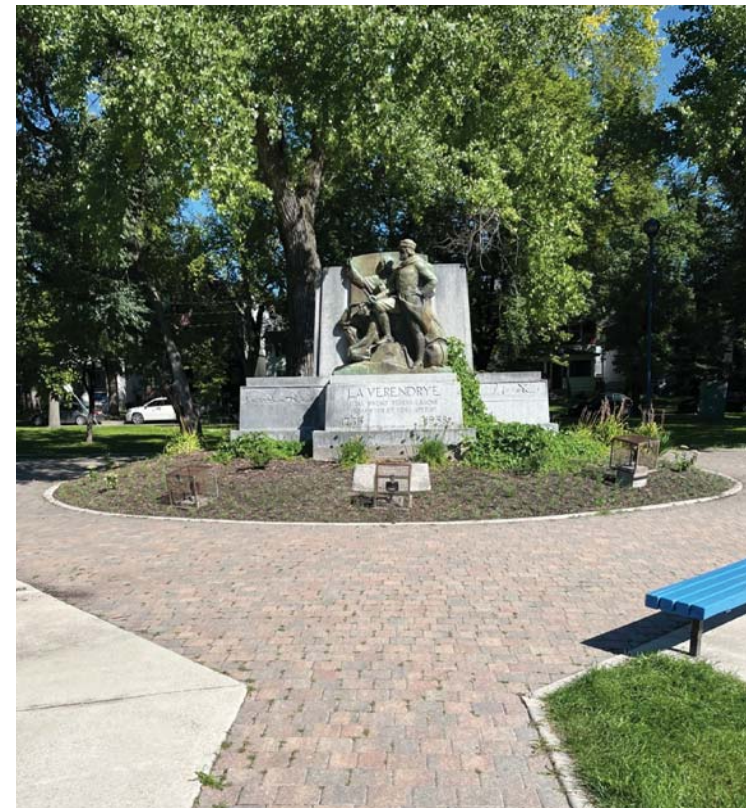
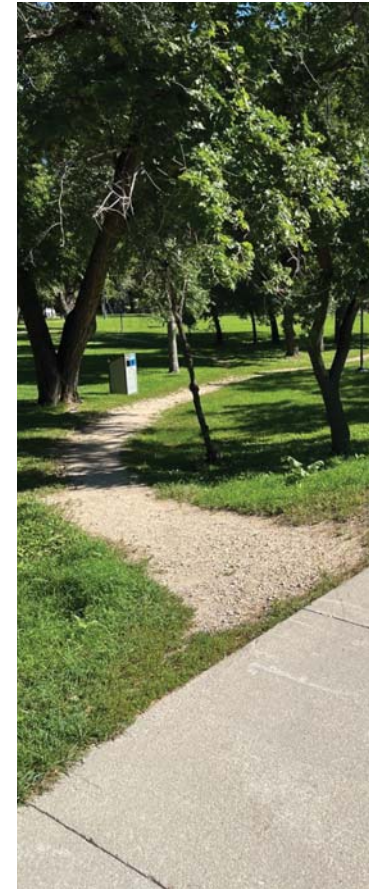
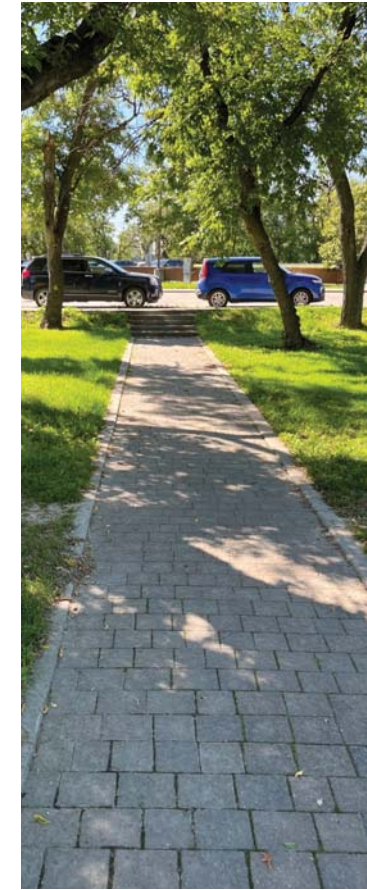




PARC LA VÉRENDRYE SITE ENHANCEMENTS | AMÉNAGEMENT

Conceptual Master Plan | Plan Maître Conceptuel

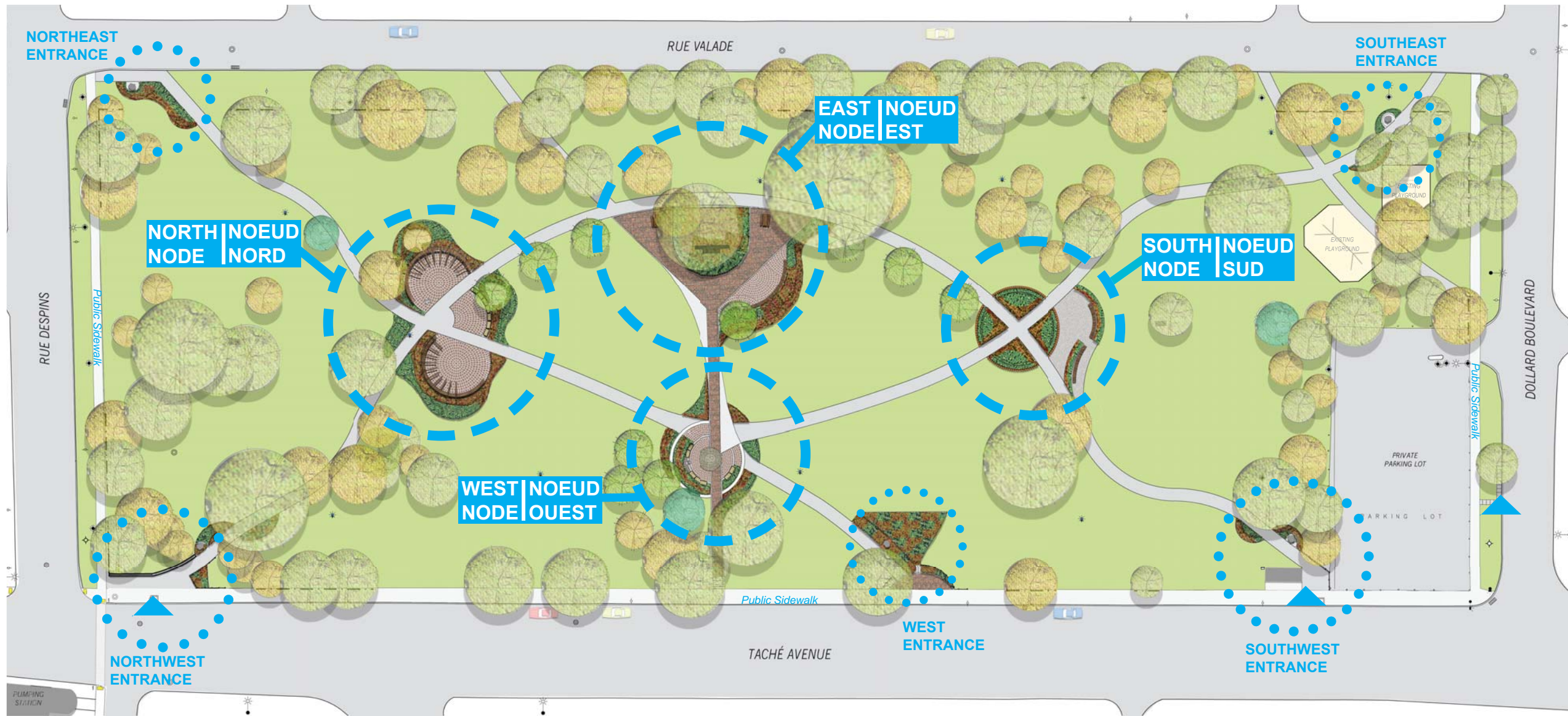
March 2023 | Mars 2023






Existing views of the park



CONTEXT | CONTEXTE



LEGEND / LÉGENDE

-  Entries / Entrées
-  Feature Node / Noeuds d'intérêts
-  Winnipeg Transit Stop / Arrêt d'autobus

CONCEPT

The vision for the La Vérendrye Park Master Plan site enhancement project master plan is based on the concept of weaving the stories of the fur trade, the Métis community, and the First Nations peoples, and is dedicated to teaching, contemplation, and celebration.

La Vérendrye Park sits on the east side of Taché Avenue between Dollard Boulevard and Rue Despins - a passageway for visitors who come from across the Red River or elsewhere in Winnipeg and make their trek to the St. Boniface Hospital right across the street, or into the St. Boniface community. Histories and stories begin to weave together as people cross each other's paths.

The concept of weaving is seen in the traditional crafting of the Métis Sash and the traditional art form of Ojibwe finger weaving. Jessica Outram, a Métis poet, describes these Indigenous art forms as a metaphorical form of storytelling. The weaving of threads represents cultural change, the impact of one culture on another. A new thread is a new life, a new family member, a new beginning into the emergence of one's own story, identity, and history. Similarly, weaving is a concept that can be applied to the fur trade era and its coordinated dance of trade routes, portaging, and traversed trails. This new era was the cornerstone of the French-Canadian military officer, fur trader, and explorer La Vérendrye, whose statue is erected in the centre of the park.

The proposed vision for the park's evolution explores this notion of weaving, threading together the lost stories of the Métis and First Nations peoples, as well as the true histories of the fur trade era. Each route within the park weaves towards the park's entryways, allowing visitors to explore the space and converge to the centre of the park. The centre features a pavilion overlooking the La Vérendrye statue and includes a series of storytelling signage that explores the contemporary and historical heritage of La Vérendrye and his connection to the Métis and First Nations peoples. The park's narrative encourages visitors to contemplate and reflect on Francophone heritage and its future in a climate of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.



La vision du plan directeur pour l'amélioration du site du parc de La Vérendrye est fondée sur le concept du tissage des histoires de la traite des fourrures, de la communauté métisse et des peuples des Premières Nations, et repose sur les principes de l'enseignement, de la contemplation et de la célébration.

Le parc La Vérendrye se trouve du côté est de l'avenue Taché, entre le boulevard Dollard et la rue Despins – un passage pour les personnes qui viennent de l'autre côté de la rivière Rouge ou d'ailleurs à Winnipeg pour se rendre à l'Hôpital Saint-Boniface, de l'autre côté de la rue, ou dans la communauté de Saint-Boniface. C'est par cette voie que les histoires, les récits et les passants et passantes commencent à s'entremêler.

Le concept de tissage se retrouve dans la fabrication traditionnelle de la ceinture métisse et dans l'art traditionnel du tissage des doigts ojibwé. Jessica Outram, poète métisse, décrit ces formes d'art autochtones comme une forme métaphorique de narration. Le tissage de fils représente le changement culturel, l'impact d'une culture sur une autre. Un nouveau fil est une nouvelle vie, un nouveau membre de la famille, un nouveau départ dans l'émergence de son propre récit, de sa propre identité et de sa propre histoire. De même, le tissage est un concept qui peut s'appliquer à l'époque de la traite des fourrures et à la danse coordonnée de ses routes de commerce, de ses portages et de ses sentiers qui s'entrecroisent. Cette nouvelle ère a été au cœur des activités de l'officier militaire, du commerçant de fourrures et de l'explorateur canadien-français qu'était La Vérendrye, dont la statue est érigée au centre du parc. La vision proposée pour l'évolution du parc explore cette notion de tissage, reliant les histoires perdues des Métis et des Premières Nations, ainsi que les véritables histoires de l'époque du commerce des fourrures. Chaque parcours à l'intérieur du parc mène vers les entrées du parc, permettant aux gens d'explorer l'espace et de converger vers le centre du parc. Ce dernier comprend un pavillon surplombant la statue de La Vérendrye, ainsi qu'une série de panneaux narratifs explorant l'héritage contemporain et historique de La Vérendrye et ses liens avec les Métis et les Premières Nations. Le récit du parc encourage les personnes qui visitent l'endroit à contempler et à réfléchir au patrimoine francophone et à son avenir dans un climat de réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones.



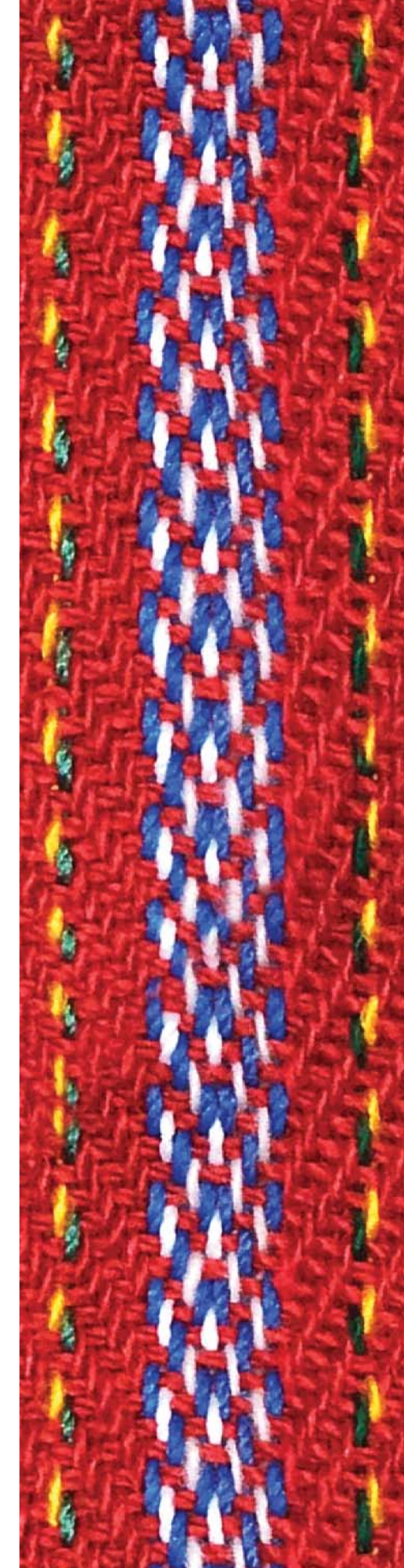
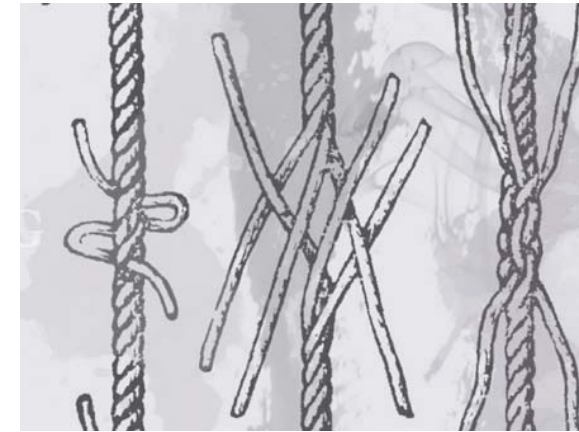
GRANDFATHERS SASH

*being in each thread
finger weaving*

*red roads
fight with rights
roots connect in webs
below ground.
green womb of land
abundance on shores,
in waters.
gold resilience
strives to shine across time.
blue spirits, a family
welcome to our picnic.
white sky candles
gifts feed our bellies and souls
black thread of lost lives*

pierces belonging.

- Poem by Jessica Outram, Métis Poet





NORTHWEST ENTRANCE

A flashing beacon and a crosswalk provide adequate pedestrian connection between the park and the Saint-Boniface Belvédère along Taché Avenue. The entrance to the park is formalized with gabion cages, plantings and an ornamental fence. The gabion cages help to address grade change, creating an accessible pathway for pedestrians, and also serve as an anchor point for a new "Parc La Vérendrye Park" sign. As people enter, they pass a large boulder, marking one of the four corners.

ENTRÉE NORD-OUEST

Un feu clignotant et un passage piétonnier assurent une liaison piétonne adéquate entre le parc et le Belvédère de Saint-Boniface le long de l'avenue Taché. L'entrée du parc est encadrée par des cages en gabion, des plantes et une clôture ornementale. Les cages en gabion contribuent à atténuer la dénivellation, créant ainsi un sentier accessible aux personnes à pied, et servent également de point d'ancrage pour le nouveau panneau « Parc La Vérendrye Park ». En entrant, les gens passent devant un gros rocher qui marque l'un des quatre coins du parc.



NORTH NODE

This gathering space offers flexible seating surfaces, partially covered by two wooden pergolas to provide partial shade. Planting beds surround the pergolas to serve as a buffer between the gathering area and the rest of the park.

NOEUD NORD

Cet espace de rassemblement offre des surfaces flexibles pour s'asseoir, partiellement couvertes par deux pergolas en bois pour fournir une ombre partielle. Des plates-bandes entourent les pergolas pour servir de séparation entre l'espace de rassemblement et le reste du parc.





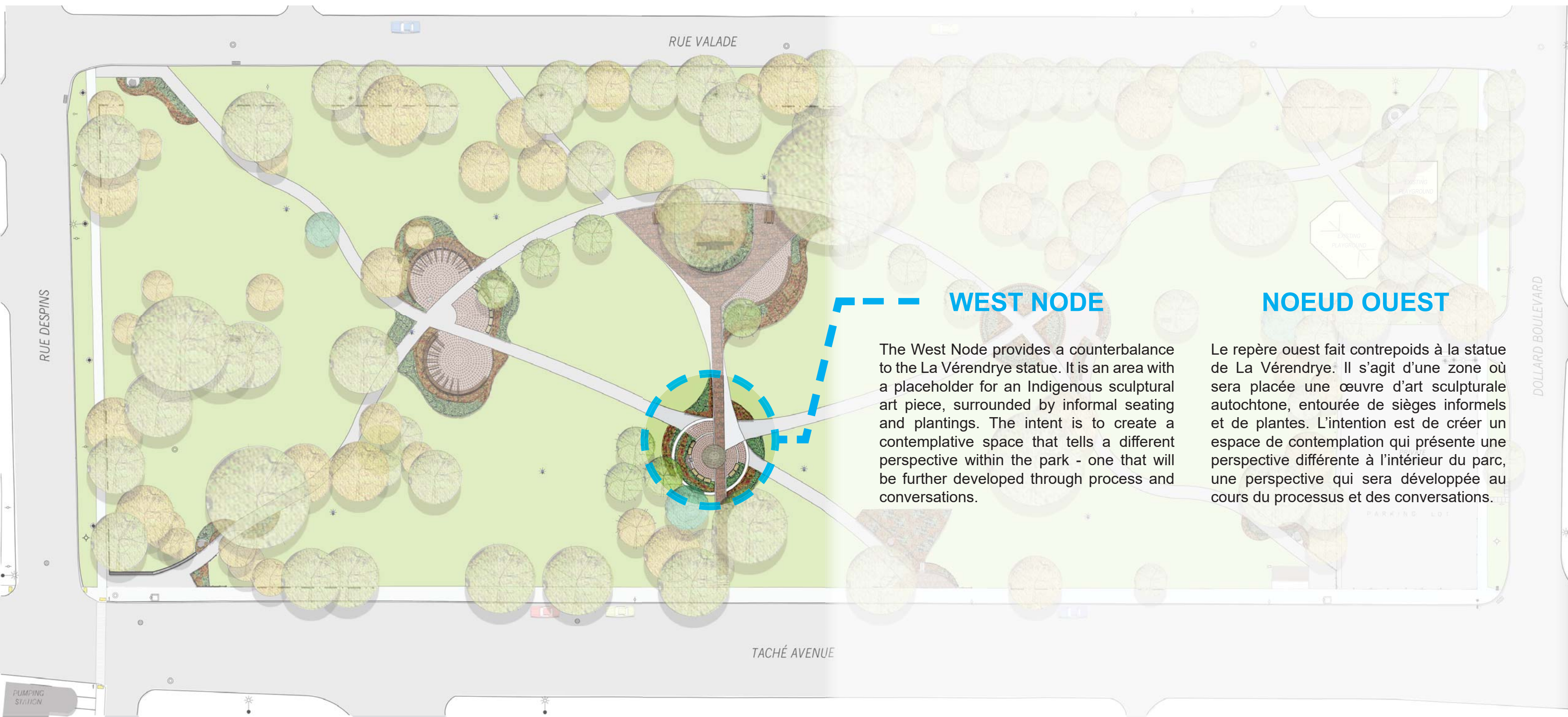
EAST NODE

A curvilinear bench provides a seating surface for the public. The shrub bed and trees behind the bench provide shade and serve as a buffer between the park and this formal space. Ornamental fences and boulders are used to demarcate the area surrounding the La Vérendrye statue and further anchor the sculptural piece.

NOEUD EST

Un banc curviligne permet aux membres du public de s'asseoir. Le massif d'arbustes et les arbres derrière le banc fournissent de l'ombre et servent de séparation entre le parc et cet espace formel. Des clôtures ornementales et des rochers délimitent la zone entourant la statue de La Vérendrye et ancrent davantage l'œuvre sculpturale.





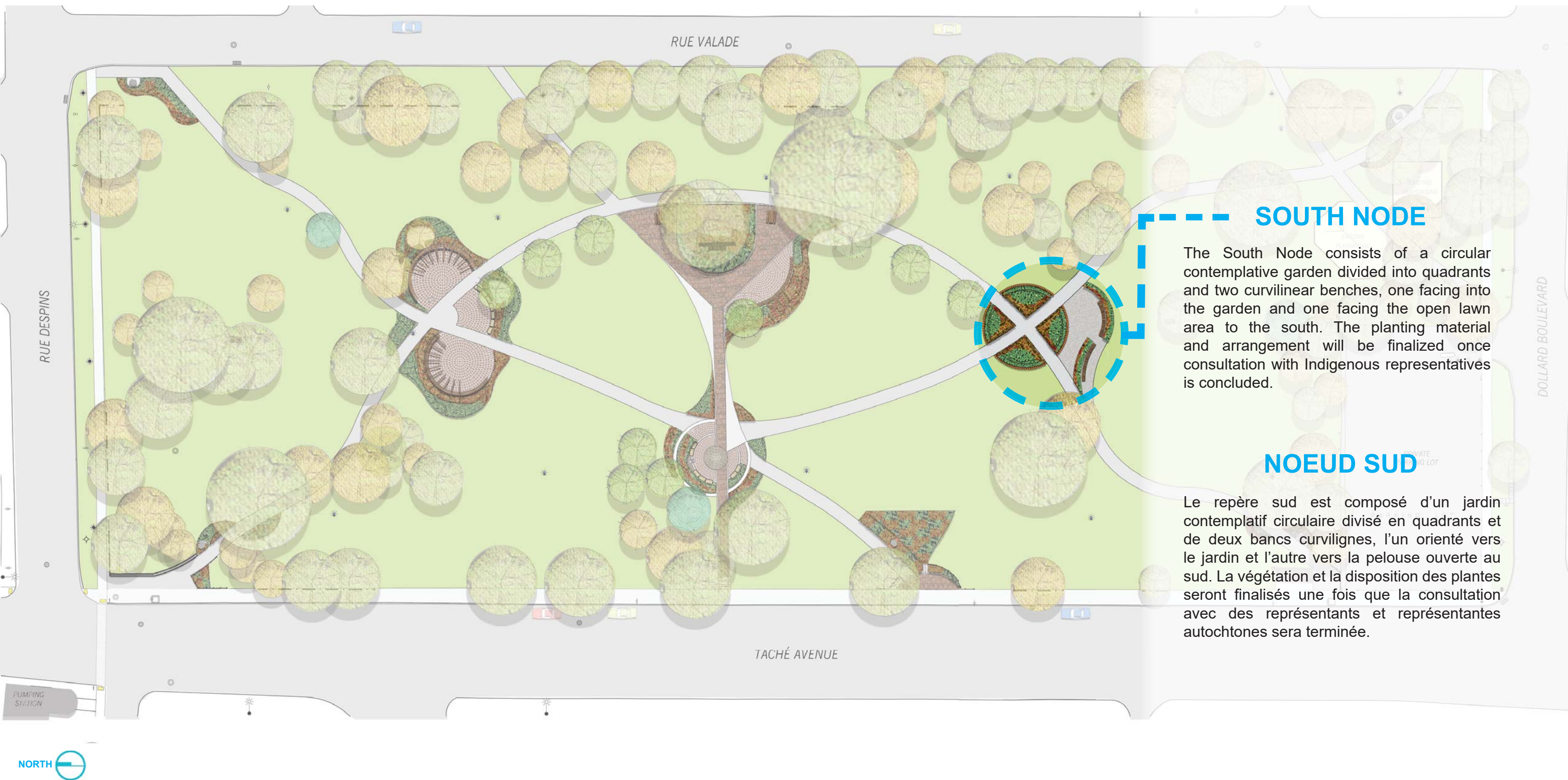
WEST NODE

The West Node provides a counterbalance to the La Vérendrye statue. It is an area with a placeholder for an Indigenous sculptural art piece, surrounded by informal seating and plantings. The intent is to create a contemplative space that tells a different perspective within the park - one that will be further developed through process and conversations.

NOEUD OUEST

Le repère ouest fait contrepoids à la statue de La Vérendrye. Il s'agit d'une zone où sera placée une œuvre d'art sculpturale autochtone, entourée de sièges informels et de plantes. L'intention est de créer un espace de contemplation qui présente une perspective différente à l'intérieur du parc, une perspective qui sera développée au cours du processus et des conversations.





SOUTH NODE

The South Node consists of a circular contemplative garden divided into quadrants and two curvilinear benches, one facing into the garden and one facing the open lawn area to the south. The planting material and arrangement will be finalized once consultation with Indigenous representatives is concluded.

NOEUD SUD

Le repère sud est composé d'un jardin contemplatif circulaire divisé en quadrants et de deux bancs curvilignes, l'un orienté vers le jardin et l'autre vers la pelouse ouverte au sud. La végétation et la disposition des plantes seront finalisés une fois que la consultation avec des représentants et représentantes autochtones sera terminée.