

DATE: January 8, 1998

**SUBJECT: CREATION AND FUNDING OF YOUTH SERVICE WORKERS
WITH RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FIRST NATIONS YOUTH AND
GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH.**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board receive this report for information.

POLICY

The Developmental Blueprint for Park Board Youth Services was adopted by the Park Board and, subsequently, by the Vancouver School Board in November, 1992.

The Civic Youth Strategy was adopted by City Council and by the Park Board and a number of other Boards in 1995.

BACKGROUND

At its July 28, 1997 meeting, the Board passed the following motion:

THAT staff investigate the creation and funding of two new Youth Service Worker positions with responsibility for First Nations Youth and Gay and Lesbian Youth and report back to the Board within three (3) months.

As of December, 1997 the status of Park Board Youth Services is as follows:

1. 16 full time Park Board/Community Association Youth Work Projects are operating based on the 5 Principles stated in the Blueprint for Park Board Youth Services.
2. Mount Pleasant Youth Work Project continues to operate on a somewhat unstable basis with 50% of the funding provided by the Board and 50% provided by the City of Vancouver, Social Planning Department Community Service Grant.
3. Part-time services are currently in place at Douglas Park, Kensington and Kerrisdale Community Centres funded by significant Community Association financial contributions as well as existing Park Board resources.
4. Research has been completed in the remaining communities (Renfrew, Kitsilano, West Point Grey, Marpole Oakridge and False Creek). The report will be available in early Spring.
5. The need for a practice leader position has been supported by the Board and Community Associations. Financial resources were allocated for 1997 and the practise leader has been hired.

Current Park Board Services to First Nations and Gay and Lesbian Youth

Youth participation from these two populations at centre programs delivered by the Board has varied from facility to facility. The approach at all centres is generally based upon a cross-cultural model that is inclusive of all cultures participating in programs. Ray-Cam, Britannia and Trout Lake Community Centres provide the majority of Park Board services to Aboriginal children and youth. Discussions on program development involving staff from the Musqueam Band with staff from Dunbar Community Centre are now in progress.

Because sexual orientation is not a visible identification and a potentially large number of youth have not "come out", it is difficult to provide an estimate of participation by Lesbian, Gay, Transgendered and Bi-sexual (LGTB) youth.

The Queerlings East Side Youth Group housed at Britannia Community Services Centre provides services for LGTB youth ages 16-26. The program offers social activities, videos, guest speakers, group discussion and participation in community events. Participants meet weekly and are supported by a Youth Worker and a Social Worker. The program was developed through a volunteer group and is now supported financially by the Britannia Society.

Largely as the result of the work of the Board's Youth Worker at Trout Lake, a core group of Aboriginal youth are participating in recreation programs offered at the Community Centre. Because of the positive relationships that have been developed between the youth and the youth work team at Trout Lake, issues such as school drop-out, family support and anti-social activities have been raised. The Board's Youth worker has organized a case management plan that involves service providers from the local schools, Ministry of Children and Family, Vancouver and Regional Health Board and the families of the youth.

Staff also believe that the Board's Leisure Access program has also been effective in providing services to the two populations. Agency Access Cards are provided to Vancouver based agencies which support income assisted and/or low income clients.

In 1997, 1105 Agency Access Cards were issued to approximately 215 agencies in Vancouver. Of these 215 agencies, sixty-five (approximately 30%) deal with children and youth. 15 of these are focused on Aboriginal youth with 7 of them being located in the Downtown/Eastside. Less specific information was available regarding LGTB youth. The majority of youth-serving organizations using the Agency Access Card recognized that their agencies served some members of the LGTB population but only 31 were able to give an estimate of this population.

DISCUSSION

Staff support the establishment of youth service workers for first nations and gay and lesbian youth as well as enhancement of current services to these and similar groups. Through research and analysis, both national and local, there is evidence that these two populations are the most at risk of all youth populations. While current programs provide some level of service to these populations, it is not possible, given current budgets, to fully meet the needs that exist. The most obvious strategy to meet the needs is to provide full-time workers for each of the populations.

In order to enhance current services staff will continue to pursue the following strategies:

- link city-wide ethno-specific and cultural-specific youth services with Park Board community-based youth services, a "closer to home" approach.
- assist community centres in hiring staff who are reflective of the community, including Aboriginal and LGTB populations.
- continue to provide specialized diversity training to youth workers.
- pursue new partnerships and develop working relationships with service providers working with First Nations and LGTB youth.
- extend invitations to youth workers working with First Nations and LGTB youth to attend Park Board youth worker meetings and training events.

FUNDING

Given the needs of these two youth populations and the importance of establishing a City perspective on youth services, a series of meetings have taken place between staff of the City of Vancouver, Social Planning Department and the Park Board.

To maximize resources, it was agreed that Social Planning would focus on targeted, ethno-cultural city-wide services.

Parks & Recreation would continue in developing community-based youth services. Furthermore, the two departments would collaborate towards an integrated City approach to service delivery.

The implications of this agreement for this report are that funding for the two positions would be primarily the responsibility of the City of Vancouver Social Planning Department and could be provided through the Community Services Grants process. Currently the Social Planning Department provides funding to The Centre for Gay, Lesbian and Transgendered People for a part-time youth worker serving LGTB youth. A similar arrangement is also now in place with Immigrant Services Society. This organization is provided funding by the Social Planning Department through its community services grants. The goal of the project is to deliver youth work services to the Vietnamese community. A similar project that works with Latin American youth is housed at Britannia Community Services Centre.

The Park Board' s primary responsibility will continue to be the funding and provision of community based youth services. There are presently a number of outstanding requests for funding for community based youth services which are provided in partnership with local community associations. The following chart illustrates the organization, stability of funding, program type.

SOURCE	PROGRAM TYPE				STABILITY OF \$	
	Community-based	City-wide	Open to All (Universal)	Targeted (Specialized)	Ongoing	Time-durated (Grant/Contract)
City of Vancouver						
- Social Planning	X	X	X	X		X
- Parks & Recreation	X		X		X	X
Provincial						
- Ministry of Children & Family	X			X		X

Funding will continue to be an issue for the Park Board as well as other agencies, given the budget concerns of recent years. In order to use resources efficiently staff will participate in funding and service strategy meetings involving the Ministry of Children and Family and Social Planning as well as the Regional Health Board, local community associations and service clubs.

CONCLUSION

There appears to be justification for the establishment of at least two new Youth Service Workers to work with First Nations and Gay and Lesbian youth. There is also a desire to enhance existing community based youth services to better serve these populations. There is a need to continue to discuss funding and service strategies with the City, the Province and other service providers as well as with the communities.

Prepared by:
 Recreation Division
 Board of Parks and Recreation
 City of Vancouver
 JG&GE