

Date: March 5, 1998

SUBJECT: MOLSON INDY VANCOUVER USE OF CREEKSIDE PARK

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. THAT the Board approve in principle the use of Creekside Park by the Molson Indy Vancouver Race for a four year period beginning in 1998 subject to a suitable agreement being developed that, as outlined in this report, provides reasonable compensation to the Board, that protects and enhances the park design and facilities, and that ensures that any operating costs associated with the event are borne by the promoter and**

- B. That the Board approve the commencement of landscape work prior to the completion of the final agreement with all work subject to the approval of the Director of Planning. If, at any point a suitable agreement is not reached, the organizer will, at its own expense, restore the site to its original form.**

BACKGROUND

The Molson Indy Vancouver Race has been a major Labour Day weekend event in Vancouver since 1989. In a staff presentation to City Council in March 1997, it was reported that the event annually attracts 165,000 people and generates \$18.6 million in economic spinoff in the Lower Mainland.

Since 1989 the course has been on the north shore of False Creek [see Map 1]. Because of the development of this area and following a public process, a decision was approved in March 1997 by City Council to relocate the track to the east side of False Creek [Appendix 1]. The new track was to include Quebec Street, First Avenue and the necessary City lands on the south shore of False Creek.

Previous races have used a portion of the north end of Creekside Park for race related parking and refreshment services. The Board received a payment of \$3655 in 1997 for the use of this section of the Park.

The event is not without controversy. The location of the event has been a concern in the past and the relocation will undoubtedly create new concerns. The closure of streets in the area of the race and the general disruption for businesses, residents and workers are significant issues as is the noise from the race. There have also been concerns expressed about the correctness of the race and the appropriateness of the sponsorships [Appendix 1].

In September of 1997, Park Board staff met with race organizers, City staff and staff of Science World. A proposal was presented that a portion of the track be located through the parking lots that service Creekside Park and Science World as well as through a small portion of parkland at the north and south ends of the Park. This new alignment was intended to keep a portion of Quebec Street open to service the businesses and residences located on the east side of the street. It was apparent that this track would require considerable modification of the parking areas and the "omega" entrance to Science World and would result in a small section of park being converted to race track. The most significant landscape impact would have been the loss of most of the trees in the omega in front of Science World. Staff felt that this was an unacceptable reduction in the green environment of the park.

In addition, the entire park and seawall would be used for other race related activities such as spectator, preparation and event areas. The major disruption to park activities would be limited to about two weeks per year with much more disruption in the first year due to the construction of the track and race preparation. Complete closure of the park to the public would be for about four days.

After review and further discussion, the organizers were asked to develop a detailed plan of the proposal for discussion and presentation to the Board. While it was indicated by the organizers that time was of the essence, these plans were not provided to Park Board staff.

In February of 1998, race organizers again met with Park Board staff and presented a new alignment of the track west of the parking lots. The proposed plans turned out to be unacceptable to CART, the governing body of the race series. Hence a third option is now proposed which uses the parking lot and entails the redevelopment of the omega area, including the relocation and replacement of most of the trees and the reduction in green space in the park by about 4,000 square feet. Time is even more critical than previously as several months have now passed and track construction and preparation of the area will take considerable time.

DISCUSSION

If there is any hope of relocating trees, and spring is a poor time to do so, work must begin immediately. In any case the race organizers will be responsible for the installation and survival of trees of equivalent size and value to those which die or are damaged due to relocation or are destroyed or damaged by construction.

The redesign [Map 2] is acceptable to staff, will not require extensive reworking at the end of the agreement [except the small portion on the northern and southern boundaries] and will be carried out at no cost to the Board by the race organizers.

Hence approval in principle is being sought prior to the final details of the agreement being in place. The following terms will be included in the agreement.

1. The race organizers will fund the long term redesign and redevelopment of the Park to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and will provide major additional facilities for park users. This may offset the loss of amenity that results from the development of the track. The facilities [currently a skateboard park is being considered] will be approved by the Board and will be provided in 1998.
2. The race organizers will accept responsibility for any costs for added supervision, maintenance or repair required as a result of the event or the development of the track.
3. The race organizers will compensate the Board annually for the alienation of the Park during the period around the event.
4. The race organizers will restore the park, including removing the track, at the termination of the agreement.

In exchange the race organizers will be granted the right, subject to specific approvals, to develop the race track and to operate the annual event in the park for a four year period beginning in 1998. The proposed agreement confers considerably more rights than is typical on a park. The organizer will be required to submit a list of proposed activities on the park for consideration by the Board. It is anticipated that this will include sponsorship displays, commercial activities and sale of alcoholic beverages.

The event does have a considerable impact on the nearby residences. City staff have been working on this issue for some time and staff will work with the City to develop a coordinated response to major issues. Given the process already undertaken by the City, including the fact that the event has been referred to the FEST Committee and Noise Task Force prior to approval by Council, it is not recommended that the Board duplicate this work. As the newest plan does not have a major permanent impact on the park design, including bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and much of the noticeable impact is to the entrance to Science World, which is being consulted, additional public consultation is not anticipated. However, the area will be signed to inform park users of changes.

Creekside Park is currently scheduled to host one major event in 1998, the Gus Macker Basketball tourney on May 23 and 24. The development of the track and race preparation will have to be coordinated to avoid disrupting this event.

Prepared by:
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**FOR A COPY OF THE APPENDIX CONTACT
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