

Date: April 1, 1999

Subject: Summary of 1998 Accomplishments

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive this report for information.

INFORMATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In the past year, the Park Board set in motion a number of initiatives that will refocus the entire organization. The New Directions reorganization, the Performance Review implementation were the high profile initiatives in 1998 but a number of other policies were also set in place including the new Volunteer and Park Memorial Policies. The Board also met a number of challenges during the year. The budget was contained, the Fraserview Golf Course redevelopment and Phase 1 of the Stanley Park Zoo redevelopment were also completed. These and a few other highlights of a busy year are summarized below:

OPERATIONAL INITIATIVES

New Directions

Since 1973, the organizational structure at the Park Board has remained unaltered. In June 1998, with the dedicated commitment of the Senior Management Team, the New Directions initiative was approved by the Board and rolled out for staff, community partners and various stakeholders. "New Directions" emphasizes both parks and recreation as core businesses of the Board with a new mission, vision and decentralized organizational structure based on service delivery focused in three Vancouver geographical district locations.

Performance Review

In tandem with rethinking our mission and values as an organization, a staff team, working in cooperation with other City of Vancouver Departments, successfully unveiled the Performance Review program. This newly established tool will allow managers, supervisors and staff to collectively update their job duties, set goals and schedule times for reviewing progress. This is an important step in setting goals, establishing clear lines of communication and recognizing work accomplishments.

Budget Management

For the 1998 fiscal year, the Park Board expenditures were brought in on target with all changes from the "New Directions" were absorbed within the 1998 expenditure forecast.

The 1998 balanced budget was the result of good management and staff's commitment in fiscal accountability. Actual revenues exceeded the projections as facilities were utilized by the public to the maximum.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Volunteer Policy

The Board recognizes that volunteers play a vital and valuable roles in Park Board service delivery. On October 15, 1998, a Volunteer Policy was adopted which commits the Board to ensuring opportunities are available for volunteer development and experience and that volunteers are duly recognized for all their efforts and commitments.

Policy for Placing Memorials in Parks

A policy for the placement of memorials in parks was also established following an extensive inventory with stricter review guidelines put in place. It was determined that these "touch stone" are cherished by a variety of societal sectors and that their placement in passive park areas suited their reflective nature.

MAJOR PROJECTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Fraserview Golf Course

The completion of the redevelopment of the Fraserview Golf Course also brought to an end the six year, \$27 million Golf Course Refurbishment Program started in 1992 to modernize the three municipal golf courses. Known country wide as one of the most beautiful and busiest public courses, Fraserview has received rave reviews and is perfectly complemented by the refashioned clubhouse.

Stanley Park Zoo Redevelopment

In keeping with the 'green' philosophy of the Board and to maintain the natural heritage of the Park, Phase 1 of the Zoo Redevelopment includes the redesign of pathways, removal of many asphalt pathways, construction of a hard surface area for the painters' corner, revamping of the drainage system and additional irrigation. A network of pathways allows patrons of the Park to enjoy a scenic and enjoyable "walk through the Park." This phase was completed in November 1998. Phase 2 will include the development of a salmon stream followed by an addition of a new plaza area south of the Aquarium in Phase 3.

Shelley & Oxford Park Expansion

In 1997, the Board acquired land adjacent to the W.C. Shelley Park and along the corridor of Oxford Park. The underbrush was cleared and children's play areas were constructed in each park location. The areas were landscaped by enhancing each park's continuity. The expansion project was completed in 1998.

Bayshore Project

The purpose of this project is to enhance fish habitat, while creating an interesting and enjoyable space. This project includes an opening in the center of the Promontory deck that enhances the waterfront experience. This opening creates a transition from the green space on top of the deck to a naturalized rock face that slopes to the water's edge. The resulting increase in sunlight through the deck significantly enhances the biological productivity of the kelp and fish habitat below. Phase 1 of this project was successfully concluded in 1998.

Lord Roberts School Playground

The concept of upgrading the school yard at Lord Roberts School for the benefits of the broader community was implemented in June 1998. Concrete and asphalt were transformed into greenery; dirt play fields were replaced with modern playground equipment. The playground will be maintained by the Board with a renewal option of ten years.

Stanley Park Shuttle Launched

After an extensive marketing campaign in 1998, to raise awareness of the Stanley Park Shuttle, the Shuttle was successful in attracting passengers; more than 108,000 were counted, for an average of 75% occupancy of seating capacity. The service was appreciated, according to both front line staff and a survey of 1,000 shuttle passengers. The shuttle was successful in attracting users of alternative transportation. Two-thirds of shuttle passengers took a bus or walked into the park, and used the shuttle to reach the furthest areas of the park in a relaxed and entertaining way.

The 1999 shuttle will be operated in a manner similar to the 1998 service. However, the starting and finishing dates of the service, and the daily hours of operation, will be reviewed in light of the 1998 ridership information and adjusted to ensure that the service meets anticipated customer demands.

1999 FOCUS

With the changes and successful completion of many projects, the priorities for 1999 will be the implementation of "New Directions". This translates into the decentralization of services out into the Districts to enhance the delivery of Park and Recreation services.

The secondary focus will be the implementation of a new software program (SAP). This new software tool will allow a "go direct" approach to purchasing goods and services, payroll records, personnel data and financial information through the computer with instant budget implications.

It is an entirely new way of doing business but in the end will increase efficiency by yielding timely, evidence-based decision making and fiscal accountability.

The Capital Plan for the years 2000-2002 is under commencement. Our challenge in 1999 is to develop capital priorities for 2000-2002 that satisfy municipal service standards, program priorities and financial limitations. In keeping with the Board's commitment in customer services, extensive efforts will be made to seek public input and establish partnerships in order to achieve maximum benefits within limited resources.

CONCLUSION

None of the above accomplishments, initiatives or projects would have been possible without the hard work of the staff and management and the support of the Board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your diligence and commitment to your work, and for your willingness to take a step in a New Direction.

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