



Date: September 1, 2000

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Vision and Strategic Direction Document for VanDusen Botanical Garden

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board endorse the vision and strategic direction document entitled "A Clear Vision for a Bright Future" The VanDusen Botanical Garden, 2000 - 2005

BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Park Board (VPB) and the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association (VBGA) can be very proud of what they have accomplished during the first twenty-five (25) years of operation at VanDusen Botanical Garden. Today, VanDusen Garden is known internationally as one of the most beautiful botanical gardens in North America.

To a great extent, the Garden's success is tied to the ongoing support provided by the VBGA. The VBGA is a non-profit society governed by a community-based Board of Directors of twenty-three (23) elected by the membership. The purpose of the Society is to assist the Park Board in the operation of VanDusen Garden. In 1994 a Joint Operating Agreement between the VPB and VBGA was signed. In summary, that Agreement describes the VBGA responsibilities for educational programs; the operation of the Library; volunteer activities and marketing. During the last twenty-five (25) years the staff at the VBGA has grown in size to nine (9) employees. Last year the VBGA contributed \$600,000 and over 50,000 volunteer hours to Garden operations (figures from April 17, 2000 VanDusen Botanical Garden Annual General Meeting).

DISCUSSION

Recognizing the need to build on a successful past, and in part, to clarify ongoing roles and responsibilities, in January of this year a Steering Committee consisting of VBGA Board members and VPB staff agreed to develop a vision and strategic direction document for the Garden that would form the foundation of the Garden activities for the next five (5) years.

The process undertaken was significantly inclusive of stakeholder input through a variety of means including workshops, a questionnaire and an Open House, which resulted in the production of a consultant's report. This formed the basis of the final "Clear Vision" report. On Wednesday, August 30, 2000, the VBGA approved this report. Please see attached Appendix #1.

The recommendations in the report provide direction for both the VPB and VBGA.

By developing the vision and strategic direction document together, both organizations will be able to make better decisions for the Garden. *The recommended vision for VanDusen Garden is: "VanDusen Botanical Garden provides an inspiring and enjoyable environment for visitors of all ages and interests. With its excellent collections and the beauty of their display, the Garden promotes knowledge and understanding of the world of plants and their fundamental importance to life."*

The five (5) strategic directions identified in the report are:

Public Outreach

Public Outreach will focus on increasing the number of visitors to the Garden and improving the services they receive. Resources will be directed at initiatives related to education, conservation, special events, Garden membership and partnership opportunities.

Plant Collections

The curation and maintenance of the plant collection is a high priority at the Garden. The Garden Director will evaluate the collection to ensure that changes maintain, improve and define the collection and that they provide scientific and instructional value.

Physical Plant, Infrastructure and Maintenance

Physical Plant, Infrastructure and Maintenance will be reviewed to ensure they support Public Outreach and Plant Collection initiatives.

Governance & Leadership

Governance & Leadership at VanDusen Botanical Garden is a shared responsibility. The VBGA and the VPB will work together to support the "Clear Vision for a Bright Future" report.

Funding and Fundraising

Funding and Fundraising at VanDusen Garden will be a priority for both the VBGA and VPB. Both organizations will focus their resources at initiatives which support the vision.

Each of these strategic directions are important and together they provide the foundation for accomplishing the vision.

Approving the “Clear Vision for a Bright Future” report will show support for the VanDusen Botanical Garden and result in greater collaboration and focused annual work plans.

SUMMARY

By working together with the “Clear Vision for a Bright Future” report, both organizations can expect a healthy and successful future for the VanDusen Botanical Garden.

Prepared by:

Queen Elizabeth District
Board of Parks & Recreation
Vancouver, BC

BM/rml