

Date: March 15, 2001

TO : Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager, Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT 2000

Accomplishment Report 2000

The year 2000 was filled with significant accomplishments for the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. These goals were achieved in light of numerous other challenges including the Stanley Park Causeway widening debate, the summer water crisis in Stanley Park and an autumn civic strike. The following accomplishments kept Commissioners, staff and partners focused on our mandate while continuing to give optimum service to the public.

This report has been structured to reflect the values and goals as defined in the Strategic Plan and the progress accomplished in 2000 towards the strategic plan in order to make the *Board's* vision a reality.

Building a Service Focused Organization

On Line Recreation Guide

The online recreation guide was developed as part of the City's Community Web Pages enabling internet users to access our recreation program data base by facility, type of program, age group, date or key word. At least 20 Community Centres will be on line with their programs by the first part of 2001.

Newspaper Insert

A centre fold newspaper spread featuring park and recreation programs, partnerships, environmental initiatives, services and volunteer opportunities was delivered to over 143,000 households creating a broader awareness of the Board's diverse mandate.

Park Ranger Program In Stanley Park

This 1999 pilot program was expanded into a 14 member team monitoring special event permits, the seawall, reporting by-law infractions and dispersing public information. While the Ranger Program primarily focused on Stanley District parks, the Program also had the responsibility for monitoring special events and field sports on a city-wide level.

Rain Forest Train

Building on the success of the *Ghost Train*, this new summer initiative, featuring Stanley Park's environment and ecology, combined dynamic performances with creative displays. It will be expanded and fine-tuned in 2001.

Busking Guidelines

In March, a change to the Park Board Bylaw formalized rules and regulations relating to "*Busking*" on parks. The new guidelines will help ensure public safety, control noise and limit the duration of performances in one location.

Developing Partner & Stakeholder Relationships

Stanley Park Causeway

A long range and comprehensive plan to improve the Causeway was approved in January. The Park Board allowed the widening of the three causeway lanes to 3.5 meters for safety reasons in exchange for new overpasses, the realignment of the S curve at Georgia Street, a storm water treatment area at Lost Lagoon, improved public bus access to Stanley Park and all associated landscape improvements. An important long term objective of this agreement is to remove private vehicular traffic from the causeway by 2030. The \$15 million project will be funded by Provincial agencies (BCTFA, ICBC), Translink and City Engineering.

Water Crisis in Stanley Park

Swift reaction to a low level fecal coliform water reading at the Second Beach in early August, resulted in a highly efficient and well managed response from Park Board, City Engineering and the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board. The public was notified immediately of a *boiled water advisory*, water fountains and other water dependent facilities were closed while crews flushed and chlorinated the water lines in Stanley Park. Within a week the advisory had been lifted, water monitoring stepped up and plans for refurbishment of the old water pipe system in Stanley Park were considered.

Salmon Demonstration Stream in Stanley Park

This \$2 million joint project with the Vancouver Aquarium and major corporate donor BC Hydro, was officially opened in October. Salmon fry released in 1998 will return in the autumn as salmon once did in the Park's past.

VanDusen Botanical Garden

A new strategic direction document for the garden entitled "*Clear Vision for a Bright Future*" was approved in September. The VanDusen Botanical Gardens Association in partnership with the Park Board approved five areas to ensure the garden's future success including: Public Outreach; Plant Collection; Physical Plant, Infrastructure and Maintenance; Governance and Leadership; and Funding and Fundraising. VanDusen

Gardens celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2000 making this a timely enterprise.

Salmon Stream at Spanish Bank

Initiated in 1999 but completed this year, a former salmon stream running from Pacific Spirit Park down to Spanish Bank was daylighted and improved through the efforts of the Vancouver Salmon and Stream Society. The project cost of \$67,000 was totally funded by the Society and approval by the Park Board allowed the elimination of 10 parking spots to facilitate this restoration project.

Guelph Park Playground

A new playground was installed at Guelph Park due to the joint efforts of the Park Board, the Mount Pleasant School and the International Community Services Day Foundation. The Mount Pleasant Community was praised by the Board for their dedication toward the project's completion.

Granville Loop Park

The City Engineering Department and Park Board jointly participated in the creation of a 4 acre park near the south end of Granville Bridge. Amenities include a playground, tennis courts, trees and walkways all developed at a cost of \$1.22 million. Funding for the project came from the Development Cost Levy.

Millennium Sports Facility

In September, the Board approved a Master Plan for the Riley/ Hillcrest Parks. As part of this plan, a location for the new Millennium Sport Facility was approved which will house the Phoenix Gymnastics Club and the Pacific Indoor Bowls Club pending fund-raising by both groups.

Sculpture Exhibits

A temporary summer sculpture exhibit along English Bay was installed by the Buschlen Mowatt Art Gallery. It featured works from Great Britain's prominent 20th Century sculptors. As well, the Board approved a four month long exhibit funded by Douglas Udell and entitled *Urban Pastures* by Canadian artist Joe Fafard. It featured bronze silhouettes of cows at Devonian Harbour Park. Both sculpture exhibitions have helped the Board achieve the goals set out in its Art Policy by facilitating temporary sculpture displays.

Grandview Park Community Policing Centre

Following an extensive community consultation process, the Board approved the Grandview-Woodlands Community Policing Centre to operate an office in the vacant caretaker's suite on Grandview Park enhancing public safety in the park.

Upgrading Parks and Recreation Facilities

Coal Harbour Community Centre and Park

This new 23,000 square foot recreation centre with roof top park was built at a cost of \$11 million (Development Cost Levy) and officially opened in July. Nestled into a subterranean landscape, the nautically inspired building and rooftop park features a full gymnasium, dance studio, arts and crafts room, juice bar and meeting rooms plus 150 underground parking spaces. Above the centre, with unsurpassed harbour and mountain views, is a 1.9 acre park, playground and walking track.

Il Giardino Italiano and Hastings Park

Following a year of fund-raising by the Italian community, this contemporary garden with classical elements was officially opened during a community celebration on a 7 acre site at Hastings Park. Nearly \$500,000 was raised by the dedicated committee which worked cooperatively with staff and garden consultants.

Grays Park

A former outdoor bowling green was transformed into a formal “green”, flanked by pergolas, benches and pathways. As well, a park entrance was created and an old playground replaced with a new one. Total project cost was \$285,000 which included extensive support from the community.

Water Playgrounds at MacLean and Hastings Park

Both MacLean and Hastings Parks received water spray facilities this year which have proved to be popular replacements for old wading pools. The design of the water spray parks involves a chlorinated and filtered water re-circulation system which reduces water consumption. The cost for each spray park was about \$225,000.

Moberley Hall Arts and Cultural Centre

This former community hall and satellite facility of the Sunset Community Centre, has taken on a new role as an arts and cultural centre following a \$426,900 renovation . Opened in February, excellent progress has been made in program development and building community partnerships through the arts.

Marina Square and Cardero Park

With the ongoing development of the Bayshore area near downtown Vancouver, two parks were developed with development cost levy funds. Marina Square is a classically designed space of 63 hectares, offers water features and rills bordered by shrub beds with a central green expanse. Cardero Park, just east of the Bayshore Inn, offers a more formally designed space with alleys of trees and intersecting pathways all leading to a waterfront lookout of Stanley Park and beyond.

Cambridge Park Community Garden

Initiated by the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, the City Engineering Department and the Park Board approved a 10% section of Cambridge Park and a city street end be combined and transformed into a community garden creating 50 allotments which was officially opened this year.

Financing the Future

Budget Status - Operating

This year the Park Board had a \$600,000 surplus, though this was largely due to a 7 week civic strike. Higher heating costs, the negotiated retroactive wage settlement and revenue shortfall due to poor summer weather reduced any real budget savings. Attachments 1-4 outline the Board's financial position at end of 2000.

Corporate Sponsorship

In January, the Board entered into a five year corporate sponsorship agreement with Nestle Canada Inc. Over the course of the agreement, Nestle will pay the Board \$325,000 for event sponsorship, new equipment and marketing. This brings to four the number of official Park Board corporate sponsors including Coke, Kodak and Blenz Coffee.

Arboretum Fund

An Arboretum Fund was created with monies from ECOMM and the GVRD. The work by these agencies at Queen Elizabeth Park for seismic upgrading of the City's reservoir and the erection of an emergency communications tower, initiated a fund to replace lost trees at QE Park as well as other parks and golf courses.

Property Data Base

This list of more than 300 buildings and structures was developed to protect the assets of the Board by ensuring that all facilities are appropriately insured and accurately valued. The data base is regularly updated as facilities are renovated or expanded. Insured values of properties are re-assessed in cooperation with the City's Risk and Emergency Management Department in order to ensure all properties are adequately covered.

Changing the way we work

Strategic Plan

By year end the Strategic Plan was completed following extensive consultation with staff and stakeholders. It was approved by the Board in January 2001. The Strategic Plan outlines a program for managing the five strategic issues which will set the Board's course in achieving our vision. Annual departmental business plans are being created in

concert with the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives.

Health & Safety

In 2000, the Park Board had set a target of 15% reduction in work related injuries and committed to achieve it by safety training and increase in staff awareness. Thirty training sessions were conducted involving 500-600 employees. By year end, the goal was met and exceeded at a 21% reduction rate.

Service Reviews

Two major service reviews were undertaken this year to assess efficiencies and make recommendations for delivering better customer service. The **Major Maintenance Review** resulted in a reorganization that joined the stores and operations function while moving small equipment section to the fleet operation. A review of the **Field House** operations initiated the decentralization of the caretaker function to the appropriate Service Districts.

Communications Audit

A consultant was retained to conduct a communication's audit and make recommendations for a three to five year communication strategy. Stakeholders, partners and staff were consulted during the process with the plan slated to go before the Board in 2001.

Excellence Awards

In May, an *Outstanding Achievement Award* was received from the Heritage Society of British Columbia for the restoration and conversion of the **St. James Cottage Hospice (formerly Babies Cottage)** located at Burrard View Park. This project also received a City of Vancouver *Heritage Award of Honour* in February. Also received in May was an award for *Program Excellence* from the British Columbia Recreation Parks Association (BCRPA) for the new *Ghost Train* event and a Lt. Governor's *Medal in Architecture Award of Merit* for the recent renovation of the Kitsilano Community Centre.

Focus 2001

The Park Board Strategic Plan commits our organization to:

- constantly reviewing our services, policies and process
- working together as a team while participating with others in the community
- being pro-active, innovative and creative in how we solve problems and approach opportunities
- being service oriented and always looking for the best way to understand

- and meet community leisure needs
being accountable and responsible

As we work together to provide leadership in this organization, we will continue to build on the best, champion excellence and demonstrate on an everyday basis our passion and commitment to the benefits of parks and recreation in this great city.

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