



Date: July 30, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
**SUBJECT: Park and Recreational Needs Assessment
for West Point Grey Neighbourhood**

RECOMMENDATION

A. THAT staff prepare a parks and recreational needs assessment for the West Point Grey neighbourhood based on the process outlined in this report.

POLICY

The Park Board regularly collects information about park and recreational needs in order to adjust programs offered in our existing facilities and to help plan for new and expanded facilities and/or parks.

BACKGROUND

On March 12, 2001, the Board requested that a needs assessment for the West Point Grey neighbourhood should be prepared. The request was an outcome of the recent discussion the Board had about the proposal by the West Point Grey Academy to relocate into Jericho Park.

DISCUSSION

A park and recreational needs assessment generally involves the following components:

- an inventory of existing parks and facilities, including open spaces and facilities not owned/operated by Park Board;
- an assessment of the quality of the parks, facilities and programs;
- an evaluation of the existing demand for and use of parks, facilities and programs;
- an analysis of past, present and projected demographics;
- an understanding of upcoming land development projects to explore possible park and recreational opportunities;
- input from service providers and organized user groups;
- input from of users.

Information currently available

The West Point Grey neighbourhood is bounded by English Bay to the north, Alma-Dunbar Streets to the east, 16th Avenue to the south, and Vancouver-U.E.L. border to the west, a total area of 4.56 square kilometers (456 hectares).

In 1996, 12,885 people lived in West Point Grey, compared to 11,865 in 1971. The population has therefore grown by 9% during the 1971-1996 period.

In the future, the population of West Point Grey will increase significantly if the development of the Jericho/DND Lands (37 hectares of land bounded by 4th Avenue, Highbury Street, 8th Avenue, and the Discovery Street right-of-way) proceeds. Although no definitive numbers are available, a moderate amount of density on these sites will accommodate several thousand residents. As a result, it is not inconceivable that West Point Grey's population may increase by 30 to 50% over its current population.

A total of 78 hectares of park are currently provided in the neighbourhood:

- Spanish Banks Park (9.3 ha)
- Locarno Park (9.1 ha)
- Jericho Park (54.3 ha)
- Hastings Mill Park (1.0 ha)
- West Point Grey Park (3.8 ha)
- Westmount Park (0.4 ha).

All of the waterfront along English Bay in West Point Grey is park, except for two parcels between Hastings Mills Park and Jericho Park. To the west and south of West Point Grey is Pacific Spirit Park (809 ha), a regional park operated by the GVRD Parks Department.

Several of these parks (Spanish Banks Park, Locarno Park, Jericho Park and Pacific Spirit Park) attract residents who live outside West Point Grey, and therefore act as city-wide or regional parks.

The Park Board operates Lord Byng Pool and, jointly with the West Point Grey Community Association, the West Point Grey Community Centre. The Community Centre currently runs programs in five separate buildings (Aberthau, the gymnasium, the Pottery Studio, the Jericho Arts Centre and the Jericho Hill Centre).

Key Issues for West Point Grey

A preliminary review of information available suggests the following key issues to be addressed in a needs assessment for West Point Grey:

- Given the following factors, what is the best option in terms of size and location for the West Point Grey Community Centre in the future?
 - a) accommodating additional demand for indoor recreational/leisure space due to population growth on the Jericho/DND Lands;
 - b) possibly losing the Jericho Hill Centre as a community space because of the development of the Jericho/DND Lands;
 - c) recognizing that the existing West Point Grey Community Centre is not centrally located in the neighbourhood, and that the Jericho/DND Lands presents an opportunity to have a more central and accessible community centre to the residents of West Point Grey.
- Given the fact that West Point Grey is already well endowed with parks, how much park acquisition is needed to meet the needs of future population growth?
- Given the fact that the development of the Jericho Lands may lead to the loss of existing playing fields (which are not owned by Park Board), what impact would this have on other playing fields in West Point Grey?
- Given the special character of the public landscape in West Point Grey with wide-open views of Vancouver, English Bay and the mountains (e.g. the lookout on W. 8th Avenue east of Discovery Street), what and how much land needs to be protected from development and preserved as park?

Recommended Process to Complete a Needs Assessment

Park Board staff can make use of a number of existing planning initiatives in order to assist with the needs assessment for West Point Grey. More specifically, staff have begun collecting and “digitizing” (storing on computer) information relating to our land inventory throughout the whole city, which should be completed later this year. As well, user databases and participation statistics are being collected in a more cohesive fashion and stored in central electronic files.

Staff are also working on four city-wide facility plans that feed into our Capital Plan process:

- the Community Centre Renewal Study;
- the Aquatic Services Review;
- the Ice Rink Review; and
- the Playfields Study.

Staff therefore recommend the following process to complete, in consultation with the West Point Grey Community Centre Association, a needs assessment for the West Point Grey neighbourhood:

- a) complete the city-wide data collection and facility planning exercises, making sure that information that is useful to a needs assessment for West Point Grey is collected and stored for this purpose;
- b) analyze the data regarding supply-demand issues in West Point Grey for both indoor recreational space and parks, and generate several basic options that can meet the changing needs for the neighbourhood;
- c) provide an evaluation of the basic options generated in terms of service delivery, capital costs, and operating costs.

Noting the timeframes relating to the city-wide data collection exercises and the various studies relating to Park Board facilities, it is possible to obtain answers on the key issues in the fall of 2001.

Staff believe that more detailed work (such as determining in greater detail the facilities that are needed and their design, or completing a survey of service providers, user groups and users) should be initiated later on. It may be opportune to combine this detailed work with upcoming planning projects:

- the planning work related to the rezoning of the Jericho/DND Lands, if either owner or both decide to proceed with redevelopment;
- the planned "Community Vision" exercise (i.e. the follow-up work to CityPlan) for the West Point Grey neighbourhood, which is scheduled to start in 2004.

SUMMARY

The Board has requested that staff perform a needs assessment for the West Point Grey neighbourhood. Based on current work and studies, it is expected that answering the key questions can be completed in the fall of 2001, with work on the more detailed questions being initiated at a later date.

Prepared by:

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