



Date: January 29, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Brockton Bike Festival

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve extending the partial road closure in Stanley Park to noon on June 15, 2003 for the Brockton Bike Festival with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

SPECIAL EVENT GUIDELINES

To accommodate major special events, the Board will allow Stanley Park to be closed to vehicle traffic one day per month prior to 10:00 a.m., with no closures during July and August.

BACKGROUND

The Board's current special event guidelines for vehicle restriction in Stanley Park are primarily designed to accommodate sporting events such as 10 km runs, marathons, and triathlons. For the most part, these early morning closures do not significantly disrupt the public's access to the Park or its various attractions.

The rationale behind limiting the duration and frequency of Park road closures relates to the limited options for arriving to as well as traveling within Stanley Park. Staff estimate that on a busy summer weekend day, approximately 56,000 people enter the Park and approximately 65% or 36,600 of those arrive by either car or tour bus. Public transit does not provide the necessary service to accommodate the regular patronage to the Park and there is inadequate public parking in the West End to accommodate those wishing to park their vehicles near the entrances to the Park. Even if the regular patronage was able to arrive at the Park, access to the Park's facilities and attractions would be difficult. Families with children and individuals not able to walk long distances would be most affected - especially for those wishing to access facilities and destinations located in the Park's northern sections. Thus restricting vehicle use within the Park without addressing these issues would significantly limit many people from visiting the Park.

Vehicle restrictions can also have significant impacts on various Park stakeholder operations B e.g., Aquarium, restaurants, clubs and sporting associations and tour buses. Most stakeholder patrons depend on the automobile to access these facilities and services. Thus, there is potential loss of revenue for both Park Board and stakeholder operations.

Most events which require road closures in Stanley Park follow the Board's guidelines. The Board has permitted a number of events which have extended road closures past 10:00 a.m. In the early 1980's and in 1997, a number of Bicycle Sundays were organized with the primary attraction of cycling along Park Drive without automobile traffic. Unfortunately, these events were not well attended and were discontinued.

In 2001, staff outlined objectives for a viable program for vehicle closures in the Stanley Park:

To provide the public with the opportunity to experience Stanley Park without the noise and congestion of automobile traffic.

To encourage and promote the public's use of alternative forms of transportation to and from Stanley Park B walking, biking, roller blading as well as public transportation.

It was acknowledged that past partial road closures that focused solely on experiencing the Park without automobile traffic were neither successful in attracting people to the Park nor effective in encouraging and promoting the public's use of alternative forms of transportation. To achieve the outlined objectives, staff recommended that if the Board wished to pursue a car free event in the Park, it should combine the closure with a special event.

In 2002, the Board commissioned a survey of residents regarding a car-free day in Stanley Park. In general, Vancouver residents perceived a car free day to be a good, environmentally friendly idea. Although some voiced their opposition to such an event, the results suggested that the challenge will not be in dealing with this opposition but in encouraging residents to visit the park on that day. This involves not only providing an event which is worthwhile attending but providing easy alternative modes of transportation. Thus, the survey supported the concept of combining car free experience with a special event.

In the fall of 2002, staff were approached by Better Environmental Sound Transportation (BEST) regarding expanding the Brockton Criterium bicycle event later into the day so as to attract more people. Staff asked the Committee to develop a formal proposal for the Board's consideration. In addition, it was suggested that the Committee consult with the various stakeholders who would be affected by the proposal and if possible, attempt to mitigate the impact the event would have on their operation.

DISCUSSION

BEST currently has permission to conduct a bicycle event with an eastern road closure in Stanley Park on Sunday, June 15th to 10:00 a.m. (see Appendix A). The proposal calls for an extension of a partial road closure until noon to accommodate a variety of bicycle and human powered transportation oriented events **B** a mix of competitive (street course) and recreational (road and trail rides) bicycle events; informational workshops on bike maintenance, traffic skills and inline skating; children's bike safety rodeo and treasure hunt. In addition there will be free entertainment and performances during the event.

The road closure would be limited to Park Drive east of Avison Way. This closure restricts access primarily to Brockton Point including the Totem Pole area. The majority of the Park and its features including the Aquarium would remain accessible. The closure would primarily affect Tour Bus access to the Totem Poles and consequently the **A**Legends of the Moon@Concession as well as direct access to HMCS Discovery. Special arrangements would be made to allow access to the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. Visitors to the Brockton Pavilion, oval and cricket pitches, HMCS Discovery as well as the Totem Poles would be able to access parking lots adjacent to the Aquarium/Salmon Stream and walk in to those destinations.

The organizers have agreed to work with staff to design and implement a traffic management plan which will hopefully alleviate previous congestion problems associated with partial vehicle closures in the Park. In addition, BEST will promote alternate forms of transportation to the Park including bicycle routes (park and ride), transit and Skytrain (Coal Harbour seawall connection).

BEST has contacted the majority of the stakeholders which would be affected by the extended road closure. The operator of Legends of the Moon/Totem Poles visitor centre had concerns regarding loss of business. The Tour Bus companies either requested additional information or have not yet commented on the proposal. BC Mainland Cricket, HMCS Discovery, AAA Horse and Carriage and the Aquarium were also notified with regards to the road closure. Past consultation with stakeholders regarding road closures have raised the following concerns: significant impact on operations as most patrons of the Park's businesses arrive by automobile; past attendance at these events does not warrant the disruption; and compensation for lost business. The organizers have committed to continue to work with stakeholders to reduce (if possible) the impact the event will have on their operations.

Evaluation

It is recognized that previous partial road closures in Stanley Park had limited success in achieving the objectives outlined for a viable car free event – to experience the Park without automobile traffic and to encourage and promote alternative forms of transportation to/from the Park. However, these events focused primarily on cycling on Park Drive without automobile traffic. The Brockton Bike Festival will expand

programming to include family activities and this should increase the event's appeal to the public.

Staff recommend approving the Brockton Bike Festival as a "starting point" for a car free experience in the Park. The majority of the Park and its attractions will be accessible during the partial closure. Brockton Point stakeholders will be asked to reschedule their activities/use to the afternoon if possible. The ultimate success of the event will depend on the organizer's ability to market the event as well as implement an effective traffic management plan.

SUMMARY

While it is recognized that for many, the automobile will always be the primary mode of transportation to and from as well as within Stanley Park, it is also recognized that the Park's roadways and parking areas are at capacity during busy summer weekends. If the use of the park continues to increase, the corresponding traffic conditions will eventually limit the access to the Park. It is in the interest of the Board, the Park and its visitors to encourage and promote alternative transportation to and from as well as within the Park.

The Brockton Bike Festival is consistent with the Board's efforts to encourage alternate forms of transportation to and from and within the Park **B** i.e., moving the transit loop to Pipeline Road as well as operating the Park Shuttle. In addition, the event provides an opportunity to monitor participation and traffic patterns when traffic is restricted in the Park.

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STANLEY PARK – Eastside

Traffic Flow

