



Date: January 30, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Multilingual Signage Pilot Project - Renfrew Ravine

RECOMMENDATION

- | |
|---|
| <p>A. THAT the Board approve a pilot project of including Chinese translation within the scope of a community interpretive signage project in Renfrew Ravine at no additional cost to the Park Board and;</p> <p>B. THAT staff report to the Board one year following completion of the pilot project with an evaluation.</p> |
|---|

POLICY

There is no applicable policy regarding multilingual signage in parks. Results of the pilot project will provide information that may inform future policy direction.

BACKGROUND

Renfrew Ravine is a 2.23 ha site running next to Renfrew Street between East 22nd and East 29th Avenue. It is an environmentally significant area in Vancouver and the GVRD.

In 2001, the Evergreen Foundation received approval of \$6,000 under the Park Board Neighbourhood Matching Fund for a project in Renfrew Ravine. This was co-sponsored by \$20,000 funds made available under the City of Vancouver Community Public Art Program for a project sponsored by Collingwood Neighbourhood House titled "Renfrew Ravine Sanctuary".

In May, 2002, following a first stage technical review and endorsement from the Neighbourhood Matching Fund Advisory Committee, the project was approved, a Memorandum of Agreement was finalized and signed by Evergreen (sponsor) and the Park Board. Multilingual signage was not a component of the original project, however during the project implementation stage the community identified that they wished to include this as an element of the project with Chinese translation and characters included in the seven signs. Representatives from the project sponsor, co-sponsor and community worked with Park Board staff on developing a pilot initiative within the scope of the existing project.

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund is a Park Board program providing supports for projects that promote community development. It provides funds to neighbourhood not-for-profit groups who donate time, money and/or materials equal to a financial “match” of funds from the Park Board to enhance park amenities and facilities. The program was established in 1994 and is overseen by a Volunteer Community Advisor Committee.

Council established the Community Public Art program in 1994 to encourage and assist artists and communities to collaborate on public art projects that contribute to community development and create art legacies.

DISCUSSION

The pilot project would introduce Chinese translation and characters into seven interpretative signs that will be situated in Renfrew Ravine. Members of the community would donate the translation services with the Park Board reviewing all text before final approval, fabrication and installation. The signs provide welcoming messages, information about the plant materials and ecology of the ravine, as well as education on public park stewardship and park features including the new gateway garden and meditative labyrinth. This pilot project is considered an important outreach strategy in encouraging more Vancouver residents and visitors to feel welcome, gain benefits through their leisure experiences, engage in positive park stewardship activities and foster neighbourhood interaction and identity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional costs associated with this pilot initiative. The project sponsor will donate the time and skills for the translation and the Park Board has arranged for the translation draft to be reviewed by City of Vancouver staff who has offered to provide editorial support for this specific initiative.

MULTICULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VANCOUVER

Vancouver is home to a multitude of cultures and languages from around the world. Basic information about City of Vancouver services is available in Mandarin/Cantonese, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese through the Multilingual Phone Lines provided by the City.

2001 census data from Statistics Canada describe the following characteristics for Vancouver language(s) first learned and still understood by the population:

English only	261,370
French only	8,850
Both English and French	1,185
Other Languages	268,225

In describing visible minority status, the statistics state that Chinese is the largest population group (161,110), followed by South Asian (30,655), Filipino (22,085), and Southeast Asian (14,670) and then many other population groups.

Combined, this information provides evidence that Chinese language translation would be an appropriate choice for a multilingual signage pilot project and especially in the Renfrew Collingwood Neighbourhood.

EVALUATION

It is recommended that the project sponsor, co-sponsor and Park Board staff closely monitor and evaluate the impact of multilingual signs in Renfrew Ravine and that staff report back to the Board one year following installation of the signs. This experience and evaluation will provide valuable “field” experience that could be useful for consideration of future guidelines or policies.

The evaluation should specifically consider any impacts related to linguistic/cultural sensitivity, impacts on park use and operational issues including, for example:

- changes in demographic profile of park users, use patterns and park stewardship
- park users of other diverse language groups
- consideration of “official language” status of English and French
- local neighbourhood, and city-wide language demographics
- sensitivity of language of project sponsors and participants
- resource implications for any potential future translation and editing services
- relationship between practice for community projects and Park Board practice
- long term maintenance, including vandalism and graffiti removal

NEXT STEPS

An amendment to the Memorandum of Agreement would be drafted and presented to the Neighbourhood Matching Fund Committee following approval of the Board for this pilot project.

SUMMARY

Approval of these recommendations will provide for the implementation and evaluation of a pilot project of seven multilingual signs within the scope of a community partnership project, sponsored by Evergreen under the Park Board Neighbourhood Matching Fund Program.

Prepared by:

Vancouver East District
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation