



Date: May 1, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT 2002

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board receive this report for information.

DISCUSSION

Accomplishment Report 2002

In 2002, the Vancouver Park Board continued to provide a wide range of quality programs that enrich the lives of the city's residents. Delivered directly and through partners and affiliated groups, these parks and recreation programs played a major role in building healthy families, communities, lifestyles, environments and economy.

Day-to-day services include:

- **Providing, maintaining and protecting parks and open spaces**, city-wide and for neighborhoods, as well as sports fields, playgrounds and city beaches, golf courses, display gardens, and city boulevard trees and landscaping.
- **Providing and maintaining recreation, service and park facilities** such as community centres, rinks, pools, sport courts and fitness centres, food services in parks, field houses and athletic clubhouses, marinas, and special park attractions.
- **Providing leisure programs and services** including the development and delivery of instruction and programming for recreational, fitness and sport activities, support and facilitation of social activities, environmental education, community and public art programs, services for youth, children and seniors, tourism activities, and meetings and workshops in neighbourhoods.

The Park Board system in Vancouver is large, diverse and popular. Residents enjoy more than 200 parks, nearly 400 playing fields and sport courts, 150 playground structures, almost 200 tennis courts, eleven miles of beaches, fifteen indoor and outdoor pools, eight rinks and over 120,000 street trees. In 2002, more than five million participant visits were made to the 23 Community Centres, swimming pool and ice rink admissions topped 2.3 million, over 3 million visits were recorded to the beaches, and nearly 350,000 rounds of golf and pitch and putt were completed.

2002 represented the first full year of delivering the new Strategic Plan, which is guiding the Vancouver Park Board to its vision of the future through 2005. The Plan, approved by the Board last year after much staff and public consultation, represents the next step of organizational revitalization and allows the staff of the Park Board to work in a synchronized manner towards common goals. Managing against the blueprint of key strategic issues became a priority for the Park Board in the year.

This report highlights the key accomplishments, enhanced programs and new services of the Board, staff and partners in support of the Strategic Plan in 2002.

I. Programs and Services

Strategic Objectives: Building a service focused organization

Accomplishments:

As part of our responsibility to promote healthy living, a continued focus was placed on servicing the open space, recreation and leisure needs of Vancouver's diverse population and on achieving excellence in programming particularly for families and youth.

New Special Events and Programs

Support was approved for the launch of **MoreSports**, an organized sport involvement and skills development initiative for children and youth in high need areas. As part of a wider strategy of increasing park safety and access, a number of **cultural events and performances** were organized in Victory Square over the summer, fall and Christmas. The **Artists at Work and Musical Roots** series ran in partnership with community associations showcasing the talents of artisans and musicians from diverse cultural traditions. Other new programs included summer and winter sport festivals for persons with disabilities using adaptive equipment; waterskiing for children with disabilities; and introductory art programs at two community centres.

Resident and Visitor Communications

New **standard park and facility signs** were adopted, with installation starting in Stanley Park, helping to establish a more broadly recognized identity. The **Leisure Guide**, an expanded outline of the Park Board's major services incorporating the Annual Report, was published in September. Increased distribution of 75,000 copies was circulated through community centres, libraries and neighborhood houses with 25,000 dropped directly to households in selected areas of the city to promote local programs. More than 200,000 Rediscover **Stanley Park voucher booklets** were disseminated throughout the Lower Mainland to inform residents of recent park improvements and to counteract expected reduced tourism in the wake of 9/11. The colourful and popular coupon booklets were printed in cooperation with a number of corporate sponsors.

Strategic Objective: Developing partner and stakeholder relationships

Accomplishments:

An emphasis was put on enhancing alliances, building new and innovative relationships and coordinating service with others, all to help achieve the organization's mandate. Users of our Park Board services and programs were encouraged to become active stakeholders, partners and stewards.

Recreation and Community Alliances

As a result of the community-based approach to deliver Vancouver's Emergency Social Services programs, a number of Park Board facilities are earmarked as safe havens for residents in times of emergencies. In 2002, staff worked actively on **emergency planning** with a dozen neighborhood teams and partner agencies, conducting fifteen introduction workshops in various community centres. Additional residents were recruited into the program, bringing the total number of volunteers to more than 500. The Park Board worked through a process with the Phoenix Gymnastics and Pacific Indoor Bowling Clubs to decide on the site for a new **Millennium Sports Facility** to house their activities. A grant of \$1.7 million was approved for the project under the Master Plan. A cross-department project for a new **Mount Pleasant Community Centre and Library** complex was cleared for construction with the facility at #1 Kingsway to include daycare and housing components. Public consultation began and a child care needs assessment was completed during the year. A trial **Graffiti Response** program, tied into Youth Services, was launched for reducing graffiti in our parks and facilities. The plan, partnered with City Engineering and Community Services, addressed prevention, enforcement, eradication, and community leadership and empowerment.

Partnerships for Parks

A new **ParkPartners** program was launched to improve the ability of residents to connect with and contribute to their neighbourhoods. ParkPartners encourages stewardship, arts, safety and beautification initiatives by organizations and individual volunteers. The Park Board, working together with the non-profit **VanDusen Botanical Gardens Association**, approved the redevelopment plan and renewal fund to address the ageing infrastructure and sustained service delivery issues of this popular attraction. Phase I was completed of the **Victory Square Lighting** project, community-driven initiative to make the historic park more attractive and safe. Funding came from diverse private and public sources. The **Gifts for Parks** program received donations from individuals, businesses and organizations for the installation of 80 benches and 11 picnic tables, and the planting of seven trees to enhance our parks and beaches.

Environmental Leadership

A public **education plan for alternatives to chemical pesticides** was approved by Park Board and Council to promote reduction of pesticide use for private properties in Vancouver; approval was also given to consult with GVRD, health authorities and other stakeholders to see if there is potential for a regional approach. In partnership with the City, the objectives of a long-term action plan were reaffirmed and endorsed for the **rehabilitation and enhancement of Still Creek**. The plan will guide development along this open water course in the Grandview-Boundary industrial area. Park Board and Council approved the **“Sustainable City” Agenda**, with the objective that all City departments and boards identify and implement sustainability initiatives. Our Arboriculture Branch partnered in the design and construction of over thirty blocks of **greenways and local improvements** in street redevelopment with City Engineering and Planning Departments.

II. Parks and Recreation Facilities

Strategic Objective: Infrastructure renewal

Accomplishments:

The Park Board set goals to meet the challenge to renew large and small facilities and parks within the 115 year old system, and to achieve quality of service and cost-effective operation.

Olympic Legacy Program

The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Bid represented a significant opportunity to accelerate the Board’s infrastructure renewal program. The Board approved a number of **potential Olympic venues** in parks which will create legacies for two community centres, up to three ice rinks and significant investments in other recreational facilities. Staff worked closely with the Bid Committee to identify long lasting sports and fitness benefits for citizens of Vancouver.

Community and Culture Centre Upgrades

Our community centres, offering both recreation and social services, are the focus of Vancouver neighborhoods, and operated in partnership with local community associations. An upgrade to the lobby/reception area of the **Kerrisdale Community Centre** was completed with refurbished washrooms, change rooms and office space. Redevelopment of **Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden** courtyard was completed providing a new paving surface, trees and Chinese motif handmade tile installation for this unique cultural facility in Vancouver's Chinatown.

Playing Fields Renewal and Rebuilds

A long-range plan for the renewal of the **City's sports fields** was developed in cooperation with the Vancouver School Board. The strategy outlines maintenance and supply concerns in the short and long-term. Rebuilds were completed to Class "A" playing fields at **Templeton and Musqueam Parks**, and use of deep-tining aerators. **Eric Hamber** artificial turf sport field opened, primarily for field hockey use.

New and Upgrade Neighbourhood Parks

New playing fields at **Empire Bowl in Hastings Park** were completed to accommodate two soccer pitches, two ball diamonds and a walking track. An extension to **Tea Swamp Park** opened, to include community gardens, skating area with arbor and mosaic stream.

Grimmett Park extension opened with a playground, seating area, basketball court, tricycle track and lawn area. The second phase of **Harbour Green Park** was completed. The linear waterfront green space in Coal Harbour features new washrooms, concession, water spray park, lawns, gardens and seating areas.

Other Park Renewals

Beaver Lake Trail, a wheelchair-accessible interpretive path, was built in Stanley Park with special signage for flora and fauna. Balaclava Park, Earls Park, Falaise Park and Riley Park **children's playgrounds** were rebuilt. The last lot of a **future park site** at Fraser and 7th Avenue was acquired.

III. Future Financial Sustainability

Strategic Objective: Sound planning and practices

Accomplishments:

The Park Board sought to safeguard quality service delivery through careful planning and administration, financial accountability and a program of resource stabilization and diversification.

2003-2005 Capital Plan

Long-term strategic plans were developed as blueprints for renewal of Vancouver's parks and recreation structures. These plans allow for the replacement of the city-wide network of community centres, pools and rinks. They were drafted by Park Board staff working with partners and stakeholders and represent new approaches to delivering a sustainable system. Community centres, aquatic services and ice arenas will be replaced with state of the art facilities, new green space in park-deficient neighborhoods will be opened against measures of park land standards, and Vancouver's sport playing fields will be added to and renewed. Capital Plan funds in 2003-2005 have increased to \$45.5 million for facility and park projects, with funding derived from new sources, including Development Cost Levies, and funds from public and non-profit partner organizations.

Operating Budget Surplus

As a result of the positive steps put in place to manage the budget, the Park Board had a **\$923,000 surplus** for the year ending December 31, 2002. This surplus was the result of focused staff attention to a balanced year end position by closely monitoring the budget and implementing cost containment measures wherever possible. (See Appendix A - 2002 Financial Tables attached.)

IV. Changing the Way We Work

Strategic Objective: Excellence in the workplace

Accomplishments:

Recognizing that staff is our greatest resource, the Park Board strove to fine tune the organization of services, improve the quality of life at work and increase workplace safety and security.

Communications Reorganization

Following on the comprehensive communication plan of 2001, **staffing** was increased within the unit, with the section now made up of a Manager of Communications, two Communication Coordinators and a Graphic Technician. **Strategies and new programming** for internal and external communications were developed to support all aspects of the Board's business. As part of initiatives to improve staff communications across the organization, a quarterly newsletter "ParkNews" was introduced for employees, with four issues published by year end.

New Employee Orientation

New half-day **training and orientation sessions** were developed for new employees outlining organizational history, current issues, and employee roles and responsibilities. Just under a hundred staff attended the first two sessions.

Horticultural Apprenticeship Program

This successful apprenticeship program completed its second year **mentoring future gardeners** through work experience. Plans for 2003 include expansion to two trades positions.

Health and Safety Initiatives

The Board approved an occupational **health and safety strategy**, including new Committee structures, staff training sessions and regular workplace inspections. **Improved practices and training** assisted in the further 10.9% reduction in lost time injuries over 2001. As result, the hours lost due to lost time injuries were also reduced by 25% over the previous year. During 2002, approximately 1,100 staff attended safety related training courses. Additional safety devices such as hydraulic tailgates for lifting were installed on Parks vehicles to reduce employee time-loss injuries.

V. Awards

Vision: By the year 2005, the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation will be recognized for its leadership, excellence and innovation.

Three of the Park Board's initiatives received special recognition through prestigious award presentations in 2002.

The **Lieutenant Governor's Award of Merit** was given to architects Neale Staniszki Doll Adams from the Architectural Institute of BC for their excellence in design on the Thunderbird Community Centre addition.

The BC Society of Landscape Architects presented the Il Giardino Italiano Committee with a **Community Service Award** for the Italian Gardens at Hastings Park, acknowledging their advocacy, policy, design planning and conservation work.

Two awards were announced in association with the Storm Water Management Facility (wetland reclamation) at Stanley Park's Lost Lagoon. An **Award of Excellence** from the Consulting Engineers of BC was presented to the engineering company, Kerr Wood Leidel, which was contracted to complete the project. Landscape architects Philips Wuori and Long were presented with the **Regional Honour Award** from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects.

VI. Focus 2003

Focus will remain on the **system-wide revitalization** under the 2003-2005 Capital Plan, to achieve a good balance between sports and leisure, parks and open space amenities, and infrastructure maintenance and renewal.

New **communications and information** programs will be delivered to improve recognition and awareness of Park Board services throughout the city.

Performance measurement practices will be developed across the Board to help evaluate effectiveness of our service, manage our resources better and guide the organization in terms of decision-making. Indicators will be put in place to gauge the value and outcomes of our work against strategic objectives and make us more accountable to residents.

The new Board will seek increasing **public participation** in its process, scheduling six regular meetings across the city in different neighborhoods.

SUMMARY

In 2002, the Park Board retained its leadership role in sustaining the environment, and developing and maintaining attractive parks and a healthy urban forest. We offered residents a wide variety of leisure opportunities and involved them in the decision-making process for parks and recreation. Through hard work and dedication to our mission of 'provide, preserve and advocate', the Park Board was a major contributor to the quality of life and the well-being of communities and individuals in Vancouver.

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