



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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POLICY REPORT RECREATION

Report Date: May 01, 2008
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager, Park Board in consultation with the General Manager of Olympic and Paralympic Operations

SUBJECT: Vancouver Sport Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council adopt "Vancouver Sport for Life," the Vancouver Sport Strategy (VSS) as a guide to the City's future initiatives and engagement with sport programs, facilities and events.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to conduct further consultations with sport stakeholders and the broader community, and report back later in 2008 with a detailed implementation plan, including Operating and Capital resource requirements, funding strategies and timeline.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Parks recommends APPROVAL of A and B.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of this report and the proposed Vancouver Sport Strategy, noting that the major impetus for development of a civic sport strategy was the awarding of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games to Vancouver. The Sport Strategy supports the Strategic Objective for "Sports and fitness legacies" (5.2) in the City of Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Strategic Plan: "The City will design

venues, develop programs and make alliances that ensure substantial sport and fitness legacies are enjoyed by the citizens of Vancouver long past 2010."

Attention will need to be given, in implementation planning, to City processes for resolution of competing interests in the context of limited physical and financial resources, both to address the wide spectrum of sports and recreational interests (e.g. passive recreational, youth participation, elite competitive sports, etc.), and to address other important public benefit interests (e.g. land for other civic facilities and schools, funding for childcare, libraries, non-market housing, etc). Typically the resolution of these matters occurs through capital plans, community plans such as Visions, neighbourhood centre plans, community amenity plans, major projects planning and rezonings. Recent experience points to the value of an integrated approach to meeting a variety of needs resulting in, for example, multi-purpose designed and operated facilities. A clear understanding is required regarding how implementation of the Vancouver Sport Strategy will dovetail with these broad city and community planning processes.

COUNCIL POLICY

On July 13, 2006, Council approved the development "of a comprehensive Sport Strategy to guide the direction of sport infrastructure, programming and support for events, to be developed in conjunction with the sport community, sport tourism stakeholders and other groups and that the Board of Parks and Recreation be requested to lead and facilitate the project and report back with details on resources and funding required to complete the study."

Subsequently, on October 30, 2006, Council approved an Administrative Report entitled "Vancouver Sport Strategy: Resources and Funding Required" and later approved funding of \$150,000 for development of the Sport Strategy in the context of the 2007 Interim Operating Budget.

In 2004, Council approved a policy statement in support of celebrations, sporting events and special events: "Council welcomes celebrations and special events for their contribution in making Vancouver a vibrant City, in reflecting our cultural diversity and neighbourhood character, and for the economic, cultural and recreational benefits they bring to the City. Council supports the facilitation of these events by staff, encourages mitigation of short-term disruptions in neighbourhoods and encourages citizens to welcome these activities and to participate in them."

On July 13, 2006, Council approved a Sport Hosting Policy Statement: "The City of Vancouver will consider opportunities to support sporting events that have the potential to bring significant direct and/or indirect economic, social, health and community development benefits to Vancouver, advance civic priorities and/or ensure needed legacies."

PURPOSE

This report provides an overview of the proposed Vancouver Sport Strategy (attached as an appendix) and highlights the implications of the Strategy with respect to the City's engagement with sport.

BACKGROUND

Over the past few years, the City has expanded its engagement with sport and sporting events. The most obvious impetus for doing so was the 2003 selection of Vancouver as a host city for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Since the awarding of the Games, Council has several times expressed an interest in approaches and incentives to encourage sport hosting events in Vancouver and in raising the City's sport profile generally.

In 2004, sporting events began to be explicitly merged with other special events, festivals and celebrations with respect to civic policy development and administrative processes. The City entered a partnership with HostingBC, working with the Province, VANOC, 2010 LegaciesNow, to coordinate support for sport hosting, including Olympic test events. In 2007, the City established its own Sport Event Hosting Grant program to support large scale events not eligible for funding through the HostingBC programme.

The Active Communities Plan, approved by Council in September 2006, outlines actions the City will undertake to achieve its commitment to increasing physical activity among citizens and employees through the "20% More By 2010" challenge. This initiative is being led by Park Board, in partnership with the Vancouver Active Communities Network (VACnet), composed of a wide range of government, non-profit and private sector organizations in the health, fitness and sport domains.

Launch of the Sport Strategy Initiative

In 2006, staff proposed the development of a comprehensive sport strategy, with "broad community consultation," and "involvement of the local sport community, key stakeholders and other organizations such as the Vancouver School Board, local colleges, universities and membership based clubs." "Key areas of focus to include:

- Inventory and assessment of sport facilities such as gymnasias, fields and tracks
- Innovations for potential facility development funding models
- Inventory of local skill development and participation programmes
- Coordination of permitting to maximize utilization
- Sport Event Hosting capability and coordination
- Communication and networks of various sport groups
- Planning for growth."

The aims of the sport strategy initiative, as outlined in a follow-up Staff Report, were to provide: (a) an overview of the entire continuum of sport in Vancouver: (b) a baseline of current City and Park Board involvement with sport (clarifying the respective roles of both bodies); (c) analysis and policy recommendations focused on those aspects of sport where the city would have the means and the authority to make a positive contribution, and where identifiable benefits to the city are most likely to be realized: and (d) a strategy and sequence for the implementation of proposed actions and policies. 2015 was proposed as a planning horizon, so that the Strategy could project a trajectory for sport development in the City beyond the Olympics.

Council directed that the Vancouver Sports Strategy consider the formation of a permanent multi-party sport authority in Vancouver; that alternative sources of funding be sought to assist in the development of the Vancouver Sports Strategy; and that regional strategies in communications also be pursued.

Project phases

Upon project budget approval by Council in April 2007, award of contract was made to Citius Performance Corporation, heading a multi-disciplinary sport consultant team, to develop the strategy. An initial meeting with staff clarified project objectives, and thereafter ongoing direction to the consultant team was provided by a project Steering Committee of Park Board Staff. A staff project manager liaised between the consultant group and the Steering Committee and various other Park Board staff provided project assistance on an ongoing basis.

The consultant team engaged with sport stakeholders throughout the project. Representatives from a cross section of sport related organizations were invited to an initial scoping session on June 21, 2007 to share their vision of sport in Vancouver, advise on the key issues the Sport Strategy should address, identify key challenges and opportunities, and to target key individuals and stakeholder groups for consultation regarding the scope and framework of the Vancouver Sport Strategy. Out of this session emerged a nine-member Review Group, representing sport organizations in Vancouver, which acted as a sounding board at key milestones as the project unfolded.

Consultations were undertaken with leading sport specialists, during June and July 2007, to identify data sources, refine the scope of the strategy and solicit feedback on the concept of integrating the *Canadian Sport for Life* model in a municipal framework. The consultant team also accessed quantitative and qualitative data from a number of other sources and identified best practices, from Canada and the UK, of municipal engagement in sport, including sports governance models. Based on research findings, along with project objectives articulated in the Council reports, input from the initial scoping session and the expertise of the consultant team, an initial outline draft of the Vancouver Sport Strategy was prepared as a framework for subsequent consultations.

Several methods were used in the consultation phase to gather feedback. 142 people from 120 organizations with a direct interest in sport were invited to take part in focus group sessions concentrating on the themes of Excellence, Active for Life - Competitive Sport and Physical Literacy, which were conducted in August and September 2007. A total of 26 individuals attended these sessions. To capture input from individuals and organizations unable to participate in the focus groups, two online surveys were conducted, one specific to sport organizations, the other targeting the general public. Thirty-three sport organizations completed the first survey, while the second generated 133 responses from the public.

Management staff from nine Metro Vancouver municipal Parks and Recreation departments took part in a separate focus group held in October 2007. This session, dedicated to hearing regional perspectives on the Sport Strategy, revealed a unanimous interest in pursuing regional strategies for communication and future collaboration on sport initiatives.

As the Sport Strategy began to take shape, workshops on the evolving draft were conducted with the project Review Group on September 18 and November 5, 2007. The draft strategy was also reviewed November 6th in a civic focus group encompassing representation from the City, Parks, VSB and UBC. City staff from the Special Events Office, Community Services: Current Planning and Social Planning, Corporate Services: Budgets and Risk Management were in attendance. A workshop for Councillors, Park Board Commissioners and School Board

Trustees was held on November 22nd to brief the elected officials on the *Canadian Sport for Life* model, which is the conceptual framework for the proposed Sport Strategy, and on parallel policy initiatives regarding sport in other jurisdictions.

To facilitate the development of the sport strategy, a dedicated webpage was set up on the Park Board website: <http://www.vancouver.ca/parks/info/strategy/sportstrategy/index.htm>. This page documents the process of VSS development and contains supplemental resource materials generated through the project for subsequent phases of detailed planning and change implementation. It will be sustained in the future as an ongoing resource and information centre for the Sport Strategy.

DISCUSSION

"Vancouver Sport for Life," the Vancouver Sport Strategy appended to this report will, if approved, help define civic policy in an area where such guidance is largely absent. The strategy lays the groundwork and, in particular, provides two key building blocks for detailed planning to follow:

Canadian Sport For Life

Firstly, the VSS introduces a conceptual framework which links sport, recreation and active living as components of a greater whole. This is the *Canadian Sport For Life* (CS4L) model, referred to more generally as Long Term Athletic Development (LTAD), which in recent years has been adopted as a common frame of reference by the Federal and Provincial governments, by National and Provincial Sport Organizations (NSOs and PSOs) and by a range of other agencies in the realms of sport, fitness and recreation. The Vancouver Sport Strategy represents one of the first applications of *CS4L* in municipal policy-making.

This widespread adoption of *CS4L* manifests a significant paradigm shift. In the past, sport and recreation interests have operated largely independent from one another. Practitioners on both sides have tended to regard the interests of the other as incidental, if not antithetical to their respective mandates. Recreation services, mainly delivered at the municipal level, are oriented to maximum inclusion, providing for children's play, active living, social connection, fitness and fun. Sport is in the program mix with the view that all who wish to participate should have opportunity do so. The development of athletic proficiency is not a primary consideration; indeed provision for sports at an "elite" level is often seen as an excessively costly undertaking, drawing resources from the many to serve the few.

The primary concern of organized sport, traditionally, has been improved athlete performance leading to podium finishes at national and international sport events. The number of participants progressively narrows in the pursuit of this objective. The primary engagement has been with senior governments and/or the private sector through national and provincial sport organizations. Senior governments also have an ongoing interest in promoting health, fitness and active living for the populace at large, but this interest has not in the main been addressed within sport portfolios.

The development of the *CS4L* model reflects, in part, a growing awareness that the separation of the sport and recreation realms operates to the disadvantage of both. Now, potential cross-connections and inter-dependencies between sport and recreation are brought to the forefront: Sport excellence draws crucial support from an active populace taking on roles as event officials and volunteers, or as informed and enthusiastic spectators. Excellence path athletes lead, coach and inspire the rest of the populace to participate in physical activity to the best of their ability, and sooner or later, after pursuing podium performances, these athletes themselves transition back to being active for life. Analogous to the development of reading and writing skills, appropriate sports programming for children builds their physical literacy, preparing them for active living as adults or, should they so choose, pursuit of athletic excellence.

These interactions between physical literacy, active living and sports excellence have profound implications for civic service provision and facility development. Park Board community centres, pools, rinks, playing fields and other recreation facilities may in future become sites of interactivity between high performance athletics, active living programming for adults and physical literacy development for children. The design and construction of new facilities, and the renewal of existing ones, would accommodate a wider range of uses, always ensuring that the achieved benefits for the population at large are commensurate with the civic investment. Such an expanded scope of service also implies connections to be made and partnerships established such that resources can be pooled and efficiencies achieved. The outcomes should be mutually beneficial to sport and to the City.

A Multi-Party Sport Advisory

The second key building block proposed is the creation of a body, tentatively called the Vancouver Sport Network (VSnet), to steward implementation of the Sport Strategy and advise on sport related matters generally, including priorities for sport hosting, facility development and programming. VSnet would be composed of representatives of a cross-section of sport-related organizations in the City, balanced between provider agencies and end-users of facilities and services. VSnet would provide the City's sport community with a context to link together and engage in a productive and ongoing dialogue with City government, through Park Board, to City Council. VSnet member organizations would be required to adopt *CS4L* principles and adhere to standards for coaching certification, safety and ethical conduct.

The idea of VSnet was inspired by the example of VACnet which, as noted above, was set up to support the Active Communities initiative and to follow through on the "20% more by 2010" challenge. Since its formation, VACnet has demonstrated an interest in a broad range of sport related matters, and has been involved in and keenly supportive of the development of the Sport Strategy. As well, the composition of VACnet very closely matches the interests which should be represented in a body such as VSnet. Staff have had preliminary discussions with VACnet and have confirmed their preparedness to take on the role and responsibilities described for VSnet. There is general agreement that this course of action is much preferable to essentially creating a duplicate organization.

Becoming the champion and steward of the Vancouver Sport Strategy will require VACnet to restructure and repurpose itself to some extent. As well, however constituted, VSnet will likely evolve through time to seek a more formal mandate and procedural practices. These developments would be subject to future report to Park Board and Council.

Key Findings

The primary importance of the groundwork described above reflects the prevailing conditions affecting sport in the City, as revealed during the consultation phase of the project. The following observations were confirmed several times in discussions with individuals and organizations in the sport community:

- There are strong advocates for sport in Vancouver, but no one voice speaks for sports interests as a whole. As a result there is a lack of coordination of programming and events between and, at times, within sport sectors.
- There is a perceived disconnect between the interests and requirements of sport and the receptivity and support of city government, including Park Board. Knowledge of civic services and how to obtain them is unevenly distributed, resulting in inequities in access to services.
- There is support for broader partnerships in the delivery of sport in Vancouver, particularly linking the City and Park Board with the Vancouver School Board and the University of British Columbia.
- The Vancouver Sport Strategy initiative is widely supported, and seen as a commitment by the City and the Park Board to making positive changes.

Strategic Goals of the Vancouver Sport Strategy

At the heart of the Vancouver Sport Strategy are six strategic goals and associated recommendations, in response to which a detailed implementation plan will be framed. The strategic goals are:

- (1) *Strengthened Interaction:* A coordinated approach is taken to sport development in Vancouver, with all stakeholders committed to partner-based leadership, effective connectivity, and open communication.
- (2) *Physical Literacy for All:* All children, from all segments of Vancouver, possess movement, sport and decision making skills to enjoy sport and physical activity for life.
- (3) *Active For Life:* All Vancouver citizens, regardless of age, ability, physical capabilities, economic status, gender, culture, language and location are aware, connected and able to access the places and conditions that support structured and unstructured sport activity
- (4) *Enhanced Excellence:* The Vancouver sport community is integrated and sustains a pool of athletes, coaches, officials, clubs and training centres, systematically achieving results at provincial, national and international competition through fair and ethical means. Vancouver is recognized for strategically hosting events of all types which support tourism, economic and sport development, while leaving social and community legacies.
- (5) *Quality Facilities for Participation and Performance:* A diverse range of accessible and welcoming facilities encourage all Vancouverites to pursue sport at any level of the Canadian Sport for Life model: Physical Literacy, Excellence and Active for Life.

- (6) *Recognition as a Premiere Event Destination:* Vancouver is recognized for strategically hosting events of all types which support tourism, economic and sport development, while leaving social and community legacies.

Desired Outcomes

The strategic goals in the Vancouver Sport Strategy are predicated on achieving a number of positive outcomes, which were enumerated in the terms of reference for the project as follows:

- a) Expand participation by Vancouver residents in organized sports, and enhance the experience of participants as athletes, volunteers and spectators.
- b) Increase the number, quality and profile of sport competitions and events hosted by Vancouver.
- c) Determine how civic support and investment will be directed towards sport, and coordinate the City's areas of focus with those of other municipalities within the Region and with locally active agencies concerned with sport.
- d) Ensure that the policies and practices of sport groups supported by the City (e.g., through funding or access to facilities) meet acceptable standards with respect to coach training, age-appropriate activities, inclusion and ethical conduct.
- e) Ensure that existing public facilities in the city are used to their full potential for sport training and events, without displacing other valued uses.
- f) Identify priorities for upgrading or building new facilities and investment in programs to support the above goals.
- g) Establish the resources and/or organizational structures needed to follow through on directions established by the Sport Strategy and to ensure its regular review and updating in response to growth, innovations and evolutionary processes in sport.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report requests that Council adopt the Vancouver Sport Strategy and direct Park Board staff to report back to Council with a detailed implementation plan and resource requirements. Preliminary analysis indicates that implementation of the VSS will have both operating and capital cost implications.

Potential operating costs would mainly involve staff and technology supports for program development and delivery, training, improved allocation/booking systems, sport event data collection and evaluation and the formation of best practice partnerships. The first recourse would be to address these needs through existing Parks Operating budget reallocation coupled with contributions from partner agencies.

The VSS may also give rise to consideration of capital projects beyond what is envisioned in current Park Board long range renewal and new facility development plans. These would mainly be connected with the construction or upgrading of facilities to accommodate training at the level of excellence and to the requisite standards for hosting major events. Again, the first priority would be to pursue capital funding in the context of partnerships with, for example, senior governments, foundations and corporations, before seeking Capital Plan support.

Given approval of the Vancouver Sport Strategy, a detailed implementation plan will address each of the VSS strategic goals, including ongoing staffing requirements, operating and capital budget implications, and funding strategies will be reported back to Park Board and Council.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Upon approval of the Sport Strategy, the first implementation steps are as follows:

- Referral of the Vancouver Sport Strategy to the Vancouver Active Communities Network (VACnet), with staff facilitation, to determine how to reconstitute itself as a steward and champion of VSS implementation.
- Action plan development on each of the VSS strategic goals, with input from sport stakeholders, staff and the broader public generated through workshop formats and via the Park Board website.
- Reporting back to Council, via the Park Board, on action plans and resource needs in the context of a detailed implementation plan.

CONCLUSION

Council is asked to endorse "Sport for Life," the proposed Vancouver Sport Strategy as the basis of defining the City's relationship with sport and for future planning in relation to sport programs, facilities and events. The creation of a sport advisory body (VSnet) is proposed, with the Vancouver Active Communities Network identified as prepared and able to re-organize itself to take on this role. Further consultation will take place with sport stakeholders and the broader community, and a detailed implementation plan will be reported back to Park Board and Council.

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DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL AND REPORT CONCURRENCES

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This report has been prepared in consultation with the departments listed to the right, and they concur with its contents.

Concurring Departments:

Budgets - Annette Klein _____
Signature

