

Date: March 25, 2009



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Accomplishments Report 2008

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board receives this report for information.

BACKGROUND

Mission: *"to provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit people, communities and the environment"*.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is responsible for:

People: leisure and sports, education, arts and culture, youth, children and seniors, ensuring accessibility

Places: community centres, rinks, pools, fitness centres, restaurants, concessions, marinas, clubhouses

Parks: city-wide and neighborhood green spaces, remnant woodlands, beaches, display gardens, playing fields, conservatory, golf courses, street trees

The wide range of park and recreation programs, delivered directly and through partners, contributes to healthy communities and families and to a healthy environment and economy for the City. Many activities benefit people's lives no matter their age, ability, interest or economic means. The Park Board champions personal and community well-being - connecting neighbours, improving the natural landscape and keeping lives in balance.

Programs are diverse and popular:

- 223 parks, comprising 1,300 hectares or 11% of the City's land area
- 23 community centres, 9 indoor and 5 outdoor pools, 8 ice rinks, 24 fitness centres
- 3 full-length golf courses and 3 pitch & putt golf courses
- 137 playing fields, 180 tennis courts, 58 other sport courts, 6 skateboard parks
- 154 children's playgrounds, 135 diamonds, 7 cricket pitches
- 18 kilometres of beaches, 2 marinas
- 100+ kilometres of pathways
- 135,000 street trees

DISCUSSION

This report highlights the key accomplishments, enhanced programs and new services of the Board, staff and partners in 2008, all focused at the five directions of the Strategic Plan 2005-2010: Greening the Park Board, Engaging People, Working Together, Managing Resources and Meeting Future Challenges. The five-year plan assisted the Park Board to stay relevant, manage its resources wisely and deliver on its mission.

The Board is committed to measuring its performance against organizational objectives in order to remain accountable, continuously improve and evaluate success. A number of performance indicators are presented in each strategic area to track progress. (*Note: 2007 figures were affected by the 12 week work stoppage.*)

2008 Accomplishments

1. Greening the Park Board

“Develop sustainable policies and practices to achieve environmental objectives while meeting the needs of the community”

The preservation and enhancement of the natural environment is a core responsibility of the Park Board. The organization pursued a more sustainable approach to doing business.

During the year, the Park Board promoted and advocated for urban ecology and environmental education. Staff Arborists hosted guided tree walks in Queen Elizabeth and Stanley Parks as part of the City’s annual Spring Cherry Blossom Festival. With community partners, Earth Day was celebrated with tree plantings and family activities at Everett Crowley, Hastings and Jericho Parks; over 5,000 participants took part. A comprehensive tree management plan was developed for Queen Elizabeth Park to restore and protect significant view corridors and habitats. Community events and park clean-ups were held by more than 40 groups under the ParkPartners program, including Stanley Park Ecology Society Ivy Busters, Jericho Park Stewardship invasive plant removals and Hastings Park Conservancy’s support for Active Communities Adventure Passports. An assessment of the Shakespeare Garden in Stanley Park was completed, with a range of options developed to improve the area’s profile and attract more visitors.

High standards of building sustainability and performance were integrated into all new facility projects – with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold level targeted for Sunset Community Centre, #1 Kingsway, Vancouver Olympic/ Paralympic Centre and Killarney Rink; LEED Silver level targeted for Trout Lake Rink; and LEED Platinum (the highest) level targeted for Southeast False Creek Community Centre.

The Park Board continued to place a high priority on energy and water conservation. The \$8.6 million, two-year refit program proceeded to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by way of heating, water, control and lighting systems at 30 community centres, pools, golf courses, service yards, offices and other locations. In 2008, high efficiency boilers were installed at 9 sites, lighting replaced at over 20 sites, control systems upgraded at 15 sites, and the *Green Like Me* communications program launched for staff and residents. Initiatives were also expanded to conserve water in showers and washrooms, and to improve water/air quality at indoor pools.

SLED lights were installed at holiday displays at Lost Lagoon Fountain, VanDusen Festival of Lights, Bright Nights in Stanley Park and the Elm Grove on Bidwell Street, providing longer life and greatly reduced consumption levels.

Ethical and sustainable purchasing initiatives continued at Park Board offices and facilities to collectively reduce impacts on the environment - including use of green certified cleaning products, recycled copy machines and copy paper, printing of envelopes and letterhead on 100% recycled materials, energy efficiency requirements of courier service contractor, ethically sourced sports and staff clothing, and certified fair trade coffee, sugar packets and chocolate bars.

Performance Measures

Park Board environmental programs are achieving results:

Cumulative reduction in water from conversion of irrigation to central control

2006 - 18 million gallons (30%)

2007 - 22.5 million gallons (30%)

2008 - 27.0 million gallons (30%)

Reduction in CO₂ emissions from new condensing boilers at New Brighton and Second Beach Pools

2008 - 130 tonnes of GHG (20%)

The Corporate Climate Change Action Program, which is approximately half complete, has reduced CO₂ emissions by 1,088 tonnes, the equivalent of 209 cars off the road a year or enough electricity to power 100 homes.

2. Engaging People

“Integrate the concept of wellness into park and recreation services and provide opportunities for everyone to access these services”

The concept of wellness means practicing all the things that keep people well and happy: enjoying the arts, learning new skills and building community spirit. All people must be able to participate.

Public art remained an important part of the Park Board's promotion of the arts in everyday life. Stunning Coast Salish welcome gateways by artist Susan Point were unveiled at Brockton Totems in Stanley Park. Six artists produced semi-permanent works for the Stanley Park Environmental Art Project. Work continued with Vancouver Biennale Foundation for their 2009 exhibit and proposed donation of a previous sculpture. Various community murals and colourful mosaic works were installed in a number of parks and at facilities. Two community centres - Champlain Heights and Coal Harbour - completed six month Artists in Residence sessions.

Six community building projects were completed under the Neighborhood Matching Fund, including Downtown East Side neighborhood garden, Clinton Park fountain, Renfrew Ravine labyrinth, West End walkway, Collingwood garden mosaic and Firehall tiles. 'Monsters in the Meadow' again featured free outdoor movie screenings in Stanley Park and free summer concerts were held at Haywood Bandstand in the West End.

The Get Up and Go! recreation and sport program was piloted at the West End and Renfrew Park Community Centres which opened their gyms up to youth on weekends. Active Communities Vancouver continued to inspire and equip residents to "Step it Up 20% by 2010" – they introduced 20,000 elementary school students to the Active Adventure Passports, promoted a new series of Olympic venue themed Step Out walks, and worked with the Red Fox Active Outreach program to involve the aboriginal community. Vancouver was honoured to be chosen by Equitas, a non-profit human rights education organization, to host the national launch of the new Play it Fair Toolkit, a national initiative to teach children the values of respect and inclusiveness through recreation; in 2008, the program was implemented in each of the 23 community centre summer day camps.

The City's diversity was marked and celebrated at a number of community centres through Diwali, the annual festival of lights, and special film screenings for Asian Heritage Month. For the second year, seniors worked with artists in a unique community cultural development and health initiative. The 'Remarkable Women' poster project celebrated the contributions of women from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods. The Park Board again cosponsored the Cultural Harmony Awards which recognized community work that results in better understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Communications strategies continued to help residents keep abreast of Park Board activities and their benefits: the Annual Report (published in both English and Chinese for the third year) and the semi-annual Leisure Guide/Quick List reached more diverse audiences. Additional enhancements to the design and content of the public website contributed to more than 2.9 million visits to vancouverparks.ca.

The city-wide marketing campaign Go Play! encouraged active living and participation at rinks, pools and fitness centres. Promotions were undertaken to attract first time patrons and multicultural residents, and plans developed to reach niche groups such as children, youth, women and older adults; a Target Fitness program was developed for City staff. Online card renewal was made available for Flexipasses and 10-card visits, allowing

convenient 24/7 access. During 2008, 122,000 rounds of golf were booked using the internet reservation system.

Performance Measures

Park Board neighborhood facilities continue to offer fun, affordable and accessible recreation. Income at pools, rinks and fitness centres reflects user participation.

Revenues at Pools (admissions, rentals, lessons)

2005 - \$4.2 million

2006 - \$5.1 million

2007 - \$3.8 million

2008 - \$5.6 million

Revenues at Rinks (admissions, rentals, lessons)

2005 - \$1.4 million

2006 - \$1.9 million

2007 - \$1.5 million

2008 - \$1.6 million (note: Trout Lake and Killarney Rinks under construction)

Revenues at Fitness Centres (admissions, rentals, lessons)

2005 - \$1.4 million

2006 - \$1.5 million

2007 - \$1.3 million

2008 - \$1.8 million

Recreation-related website visits account for 50% of the top 60 visited pages on vancouverparks.ca (up from 30% a year ago).

Total Web Site Visits

2005 - 1.6 million

2006 - 2.5 million

2007 - 2.3 million

2008 - 2.9 million

3. Working Together

“Integrate public involvement in decision-making and services and expand partnerships with community groups and other agencies”

As a cornerstone to decision-making, the Park Board listened to and actively sought the ideas of partners, stakeholders, employees and residents.

Public meetings, open houses and workshops were opportunities to have direct dialogue, to share information, build consensus, reduce conflicts, and plan together for the future. During 2008, the Board again held three regular meetings out in community centres to make it easier for residents to attend. Fourteen open house and workshop events were

hosted to give residents an opportunity to review and provide input into concepts, designs and plans for Oppenheimer Park renewal, the future of Jericho Park marginal wharf, MacLean and Oak Park playground upgrades, improvements to Tecumseh Park, tree management at Queen Elizabeth Park, new restaurants at English Bay and Harbour Green Park, phase two of Emery Barnes Park development, sculptures in Vancouver parks, facility revitalization at VanDusen Botanical Garden, and upgrade to Killarney Park field.

As part of a new process around naming parks, the public was invited to help name two park sites in Marpole and South Cambie. Guided by a new citizen-based Park Naming Committee, the parks were named Ebisu and Oak Meadows, respectively.

Working together with Vancouver Fire & Rescue, Metro Vancouver and BC Forest Service, the Park Board continued its long-standing participation in an inter-agency, coordinated approach to prevent and prepare for fires in the urban forest.

A new integrated Vancouver Sport Strategy was adopted to guide future initiatives for sports programming, facilities and events. In 2008 the first annual Sport Summit was held, bringing more than 20 sport associations and organizations together, representing thousands of participants of all ages and abilities. The approved implementation plan will result in the first municipal sport council in the country which applies a national standard (Canada Sport for Life) as the model for the locally relevant advisory body.

Performance Measures

Residents are invited to be part of the discussions and decisions around park and facility development.

Public Consultations Conducted

2005 - 33

2006 - 39

2007 - 15

2008 - 14

The Park Board works to build collaborative strategies with other major agencies.

Agreements signed with community groups, governments and independent boards

2005 - 1

2006 - 7

2007 - 12

2008 - 8

4. Managing Resources

“Strengthen fiscal responsibility and pursue alternative sources of funding”

The Park Board is committed to maximizing available funds and demonstrating financial accountability.

Overall the Board was under spent by \$202,144 at year end. However, the Global Budget arrangement with the City recognizes that a number of costs are not under the direct control of the Board. Once the \$673,000 net savings of these costs was removed from the Board's accounts, the Park Board financial statements savings show an over expenditure of \$470,000 or 0.8% of budget. Of this \$470,000, approximately \$400,000 can be attributed to the impact of December snow storms. Once the snow costs are accounted for, the Board was left with an over expenditure of less than \$100,000 on a net budget of \$59,635,092. It should be noted that the Board was able to minimize the operating budget deficit in 2008, but the Board's operating budget is tight due to the \$0.9 million revenue shortfall and there is little room to absorb unforeseeable costs, especially late in the year.

The Donation program collected an additional \$699,539 in funds in 2008. It also earned \$177,631 in interest. After all program expenses were deducted, there is a net increase of \$286,279 which brings the total donation balance as of December 31, 2008 to \$2,306,801.

During 2008, the Stanley Park Restoration Project collected \$1,309,955 in donations, earned \$228,250 in interest and generated \$538,855 in revenue from log sales for a total increase in funds of \$2,077,060. Once expenses of \$5,587,151 are accounted for, the Project spent a total of \$3,510,091 in 2008, leaving a balance of \$1,938,552 remaining in the fund to complete the restoration and legacy work for Stanley Park.

Staff, stakeholders and residents were invited to learn more about and give input to the 2009 Fees & Charges and Operating Budget through a budget information process available via the website and at community centres.

A new Business Development division was set up to develop new business opportunities for existing operations and new ventures. Implementation began of the new Golf marketing plan to improve service and the golfing experience and to increase rounds and revenues; programs included a new e-newsletter, staff name tags, customer comment card system, silent shoppers, maintenance improvements and revised cancellation policy.

Performance Measures

The Park Board seeks to reduce its reliance on tax payers and increase revenues from user fees and charges and business operations.

Share of total operating expenditure not funded by taxes.

2005 - \$33.2 million (38.6%)

2006 - \$36.1 million (39.5%)

2007 - \$28.2 million (36.4%)

2008 - \$37.5 million (38.7%)

Income generated from parking, golf, marinas and food operations helps to subsidize the delivery of other park and recreation programs.

Lease revenues

2005 - \$1.6 million

2006 - \$2.1 million

2007 - \$1.9 million

2008 - \$2.2 million

Concession revenues

2005 - \$2.7 million

2006 - \$3.1 million

2007 - \$2.5 million

2008 - \$3.3 million

Many residents choose to make a difference by investing in the future of parks and recreation.

Annual Donations and Commemorative Gifts

2005 - \$1 million

2006 - \$1.2 million

2007 - \$0.9 million (excluding Stanley Park Restoration)

2008 - \$0.8 million (excluding Stanley Park Restoration)

Stanley Park Restoration Donations received in 2008

From the Federal Government - \$1 million

From Corporations and the Public - \$0.3 million

From Log Sales - \$0.5 million

From Interest on Stanley Park Restoration Reserve - \$0.2 million

Reserves are set up to accumulate funds from outside sources for specific purposes. They provide opportunities to engage the public in providing programs which augment basic services.

Reserve Balances

2005 - \$2.9 million

2006 - \$3.7 million

2007 - \$8.5 million (including Stanley Park Restoration)

2008 - \$5.6 million (including Stanley Park Restoration)

5.0 Meeting Future Challenges

“Renew aging infrastructure and adapt park and recreation facilities to accommodate growth and meet changing needs”

As the City’s population continues to grow and demographics change, the Park Board will need more parkland and recreation facilities to keep pace.

In 2008, Capital Budget expenditures totaled \$63.8 million. Capital projects usually span several years, so the spending in any one year does not necessarily reflect the total cost of a project. The construction of the Hillcrest aquatic centre accounted for \$23.4 million in the year. Other large projects included synthetic fields (\$1.0 million), neighborhood parks (\$0.8 million), Killarney Rink (\$9.7 million), Trout Lake Rink (\$13.3 million), and the Hillcrest legacy facility (\$1.4 million). \$9.1 million was spent on acquisition of land for parks.

During 2008, a number of park and facility projects were completed:

- Playgrounds were renovated or replaced in Oak, MacLean, Oak Meadows and China Creek South Parks to better serve families.
- The stunning new Sunset Community Centre was officially opened in its new home on Main Street.
- A new east side artificial turf field was officially opened at Vancouver Technical School, in partnership with the School Board. Work began on replacement of the synthetic turf on two fields at Andy Livingstone Park.
- A new urban plaza was unveiled at the opening of stylish Yaletown Park; official openings celebrated the redevelopments which transformed the West End's Nelson Park and historic Victoria Park in East Vancouver.
- China Creek South Park was upgraded to include a new community garden and changes to its long-time skateboard park

Working as a partner with VANOC and the City, the Park Board continued its 2010 Winter Games preparations at a rapid pace throughout the year. Construction was completed on the spectacular Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre in Hillcrest Park, home of competition curling and wheelchair curling events. Construction neared completion on the new rinks at Killarney (short track speed skating training venue) and at Trout Lake (figure skating training venue). Work was well underway on the new waterfront community centre in Southeast False Creek, part of the Olympic/Paralympic Village Vancouver. The Park Board also participated in the series of Game Plan '08 information sessions around the City for staff, stakeholders and residents.

Other 2010 Winter Games initiatives that the Park Board led or facilitated during the year included:

- Planning for the use of Coal Harbour and Roundhouse Community Centres for official Games uses
- Developing one of the two Live City Vancouver Sites at David Lam Park
- Using selected parks for hosting corporate events
- Developing public art at 2010 venues and in parks
- Supporting Host a City Happening celebrations in various neighbourhoods
- Expanding 2010 content on the Park Board public website and new Host City website
- Developing other public information materials and displays
- Involvement of staff in the Host City Team

The restoration of iconic Stanley Park continued according to plan, with the second anniversary of the devastating windstorm marked by a donor recognition ceremony and monument unveiling. To-date, more than \$10.5 million has been raised for the restoration, demonstrating the massive public support for the project. The ambitious and challenging recovery was virtually completed by year end, on time and on budget.

Stanley Park restoration activities carried out during 2008 included:

- Slope stabilization completed between Prospect Point and Third Beach
- Balance of fallen trees removed and distributed
- 16,000 trees planted in blow down areas
- 36 legacy interpretive panels installed to tell Stanley Park's story, with a companion historical exhibition mounted at the Vancouver Museum celebrating the 120th birthday of the park
- Siwash Trail upgrades completed
- Significant progress made on invasive plant removal
- Road realignment and landscaping completed at Prospect Point
- Historic lookout above Siwash Rock was reopened
- Structural upgrades made to Seawall
- Long-term forest management plan drafted

Performance Measures

The Park Board continues to work closely with the School Board and community sports groups to maximize field use through development of artificial turfs and other initiatives.

Artificial sports fields available

2005 - 3

2006 - 4

2007 - 4

2008 - 5

Annual hours of permitted (booked) artificial field use

2005 - 4,086

2006 - 5,135

2007 - 5,550

2008 - 6,675

Capital funds are used to acquire, construct, maintain and renew the large, diverse and, in some cases, ageing system of buildings and open spaces.

Capital Budget Spending

2005 - \$21 million

2006 - \$17 million

2007 - \$22 million

2008 - \$64 million

Financial contributions from community groups and governments allow the Park Board to do more with less taxpayer funding.

Capital Donations

2005 - \$281,000

2006 - \$1.4 million

2007 - \$1 million

2008 - \$1.3 million

Infrastructure Grants

2005 - \$2.2 million

2006 - 1.5 million

2007 - \$0.7 million

2008 - \$0.07 million

Planned upgrading of buildings and green space helps the Park Board accommodate the demands of a growing city.

New/Renewed Facilities Opened (# and size)

2005 - 3 (9,192 square metres)

2006 - 3 (4,268 square metres)

2007 - 1 (2,890 square metres)

2008 - 0

New/Renewed Parks Opened (# and size)

2005 - 4 (3.15 hectares)

2006 - 3(8.88 hectares)

2007 - 5 (9.30 hectares)

2008 - 3 (2.75 hectares)

New/Renewed Playgrounds out of total

2005 - 6/150

2006 - 11/151

2007 - 8/155

2008 - 5/154

Development of Internal Resources

“Recognize that staff is the greatest asset...”

The Park Board strives to build an organization that supports creativity, continual learning and innovative ideas.

In 2008, a number of initiatives helped to improve the quality of work for employees:

- Management, technical, professional development and other job-related training opportunities were provided for staff. A range of courses were taken by front-line workers and management through the ‘City Learn’ program, in-service sessions, and other workshops, conferences and seminars.

- Half-day employee orientations were provided for 56 new employees to share the Park Board's vision and values. Sessions included history, current issues, and employee roles and responsibilities.

Performance Measures

Total # of external training courses taken by Park Board staff

2005 - 556

2006 - 479

2007 - 326

2008 - 465

Health and safety training courses conducted

2006 - 18 (1,350 attendees)

2007 - 19 (422 attendees)

2008 - 20 (895 attendees)

Reduction in lost time injuries

since 2000 - 28%

Awards

“Strive for leadership, excellence and innovation in the delivery of parks and recreation services”

The Park Board received five awards in 2008:

- Three for Stanley Park Restoration, recognizing that the crisis of the storm was turned into an opportunity:
 - British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association Award for Innovation and Ingenuity
 - Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Stewardship Award
 - Canadian Parks and Recreation Association Excellence and Innovation Award
- Canadian Federation of Podiatric Medicine Most Walkable City in Canada Award, acknowledging Vancouver as a model of safe, accessible and practical urban walking networks.
- British Columbia Ready Mixed Concrete Association CONNIE Awards (Grand and Tilt Up) for excellence in concrete construction of the new Sunset Community Centre.

SUMMARY

The Park Board made significant progress in all areas of its operations, while managing the largest Capital Plan and meeting considerable commitments to the City and VANOC to prepare for the 2010 Winter Games. The year's many accomplishments would not have been possible without the contributions of numerous partners and stakeholders, hard work and enthusiasm of employees and involvement of the public.

In 2009, the Park Board will continue to enrich the lives of Vancouver's residents through such exciting projects as: opening of Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre; ramping up of 2010 Winter Games Plan activities; completion of the Southeast False Creek Community Centre in the Olympic and Paralympic Village; opening of the new ice rinks at Trout Lake and Killarney; developing a new Strategic Plan; opening of the new Mount Pleasant Centre at #1 Kingsway; start of construction to renew VanDusen Botanical Garden; official openings for the new Seniors Park at Tisdall and upgraded China Creek Park South; renewal of Oppenheimer, Pigeon and Tecumseh Parks; and development of a new bistro at English Bay.

Prepared by:

Corporate Services
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC