



Date: November 24, 2010

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: 2011 Operating Budget Initiatives

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve the proposed 2011 budget initiatives as outlined in the attached report.

POLICY

There is no applicable policy.

BACKGROUND

In preparing the 2011 operating budget, Council's preliminary estimates show total pressures on the 2011 operating budget of \$60.2 million. These pressures reflect cost drivers including an average 4% compensation increase for staff, the incremental operational costs of new facilities, and increases by other agencies over which Council has no control.

While the size of the gap was being determined, departments and Boards were requested to work to find solutions to reduce the impact of budget pressures. The Park Board portion of the initial \$60.2 million gap was estimated to be \$2.88 million (this compares to a gross 2010 operating budget of \$102 million).

Over the last few months all departments and Boards worked across the organization to find solutions to reduce the gap without impacting services; this included an analysis of projected revenue increases and city-wide solutions reduce the gap by \$39.6 million. The Park Board's contribution to this reduction was \$1.65 million in new & increased revenue and known cost savings.

City-wide decreases brought the total City preliminary budget gap to \$20.6 million before tax increases as presented to Council on October 19, 2010. As outlined in the Council report, between the preliminary report on October 19 and the expected final approval on December 14, 2010, staff have continued to refine estimates and developed the budget management strategies to achieve Council's priorities within resources allocated.

During October and November, city staff also undertook a public consultation process to seek public input on the 2011 Operating Budget. Council will receive the results of the consultation in time for deliberations on the 2011 Operating Budget on November 30, 2010. The final 2011 Operating Budget estimates will be presented to Council on December 14, 2010.

DISCUSSION

This report provides details of service adjustments to the Park Board operating budget to address the \$1.03 million savings target allocated to the Park Board to assist the City in minimizing the 2011 tax impact. In developing service adjustment proposals, the overall goal was to protect core services and programs while minimizing the impacts of service changes on the public.

To achieve the \$1.03 million target staff proposed a range of service adjustments to the Board at various briefings between October 19 and November 22, 2010. Details of the initiatives are laid out in the table below.

Description of Change & Impact to Services	Budget Savings in 2011 (\$000s)	FTE Impact
Park Services – review of overnight security in parks, plant materials and locations, street trees, and park maintenance	\$700.0	
Close some public washrooms and reduce cleaning at others (will not reduce maintenance for washrooms in the Downtown Eastside). Estimate impacts on up to 40% of public washrooms at parks throughout the City, ranging from outright closure to reduced cleaning services (specific washrooms and cleaning schedules to be determined to minimize public impacts).	300.0	3 RFT CUPE 15
Eliminate Andy Livingstone Park night security. Given changes in the neighbourhood there is now less undesirable activity. Will explore other options to ensure safety including mobile security services and additional support from the Vancouver Police Department. Impact is expected to be minimal.	75.0	None
Reduction in flower and shrub beds by 10% in downtown core parks, Stanley Park, English Bay parks and at Community Centres throughout the city.	75.0	1 RFT & 0.4 TFT CUPE 1004
Reduction in Street Tree pruning program. Extend current pruning cycle from once every 7 years to once every 8 years.	100.0	1 TFT CUPE 1004

Description of Change & Impact to Services	Budget Savings in 2011 (\$000s)	FTE Impact
Eliminate mowing in 14% of the City's passive turf areas, concentrating on select larger parks across the City. This increased emphasis on naturalization will impact park appearance, with more natural and invasive plants growing in areas no longer maintained. Will result in less informal turf play areas (including dog off leash areas) and greater potential for fire hazard when conditions are dry.	150.0	3 RFT CUPE 1004
Recreation Services – introduction of new fees for Playfields, and prioritization of recreation services.	\$300.0	
Introduce fees for youth use of grass fields (currently free). This policy is in-line with surrounding municipalities and will result in more efficient allocation of fields. Preliminary discussions with field user groups have begun and fees would be introduced in late spring (at the start of the next registration cycle.)	100.0	n/a
Prioritize recreation services in areas which least impact the public: twin management responsibility at two community centres (eliminating an exempt manager position and creating a CUPE 15 position for on-site supervision); reorganize facility cleaning and eliminate a vacant RFT position; apply consistent staffing model for Fitness Centres run by Park Board; consolidate coordination work in centralized recreation area	200.0	1 RFT Exempt; 1 RFT CUPE 15 & 1.0 FTE auxiliary CUPE 15 staff
Other – eliminate budget for Community Board Meetings.	\$30.0	
Explore other funding options for holding community based Board meetings (including option to designate a number of community nights at the Admin Office or to find partners who could bear the additional AV costs of holding meetings away from the Admin Office)	\$30.0	n/a
Totals	\$1,030.0	1 RFT Exempt. 4 RFT & 1.0 FTE Auxiliary CUPE 15. 4 RFT & 1.4 FTE TFT CUPE 1004

All initiatives will be closely monitored to assess impacts. Staff will regularly advise the Board on the progress toward the savings goals and the impact from these initiatives.

SUMMARY

The service adjustments for the Park Board's 2011 operating budget are detailed in the body of this report. These initiatives were developed in close consultation with the Board to support Council's direction to confine property tax increases and balance the operating budget. The initiatives total \$1.03 million and represent less than 1% of the Board's 2010 gross operating budget.

Once Council approves the 2011 operating budget in December, staff will begin to implement the service adjustments approved by the Board.

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