



Date: July 15, 2013

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Andy Livingstone Park - International Village School

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Park Board support the proposed relationship between Andy Livingstone Park and the planned International Village Elementary School.

POLICY

The Park Board operates Andy Livingstone Park.

BACKGROUND

Andy Livingstone Park is owned by the Province, and leased to the City of Vancouver for 999 years as a park. It is maintained, programmed and administered by the Park Board.

The original development plan created an elementary school site immediately west of the park. The Province has now approved funding for the school, and a planning process is underway to complete the school by September 2015.

The school is being planned as a larger facility than originally anticipated due to population growth in the neighbourhood beyond what was projected. As a consequence, the school building does not completely fit onto the intended building site, and is proposed to encroach into the park by cantilevering out over the park. A number of tenure options are being investigated to grant the School Board the necessary rights for the overhang and access via the park. This report seeks Park Board support for allowing the cantilever.

DISCUSSION

This report is a cover report to the attached Council Report (Appendix A) which seeks support for a number of complex steps toward achieving the required approvals and permits for this project. The main issue for the Park Board is the impact on the park.

Locating schools next to parks is frequently desired in order to give children immediate access to sports fields, structured or informal play areas and green space. Spending time in natural environments has proven to positively affect children's sense of wellbeing, and generally boost their social, physical and psychological health. Children need time outdoors, therefore in urban settings a park right outside the school with a variety of play opportunities is an important goal.

Andy Livingstone Park, like other downtown parks, attracts a lot of people at times, but there is ample space for school-related activities. Dropping off children in the morning, recess and other school activities during school hours, picking up children later in the day, and the coming and going of clients for the community programming of the school spaces outside of school hours, the park will become busier and feel safer with more people using it. The potential of this project is to create a community hub that will become a social and cultural focus for the neighbourhood, consisting of

- the existing childcare centre immediately adjacent to the school;
- the new elementary school for 510 K to Grade 7 students;
- community uses that take advantage of the school spaces outside of school hours, including out-of-school childcare and other community programming; and
- Andy Livingstone Park with playing fields, children's playgrounds, dog park and passive green features.

Many schools in Vancouver use parks for school activities; a good example is Elsie Roy Elementary School next to David Lam Park in North False Creek.

For reasons explained in more detail in the attached Council Report, it is proposed that the school cantilever out over the park by 5 metres from the property line for the length of the facade at a height of 3.6 metres (for illustration see the drawings by the project architect as Appendix B.) In total, the cantilever will cover approximately 140 square metres, or 0.3% of the park's 4.2 hectares.

Staff have concerns that this overhang may attract unwanted activities outside of school hours. In early discussions with the proponent's architect, several innovative ideas were put forward to address those concerns. During the development permit process, an appropriate solution will be finalized.

The school will have its main entrance off the park, and the area immediately adjacent will be used as a school recess area, while maintaining the existing pedestrian circulation. Park Board staff intend to upgrade this part of the park to make it more inviting for children's play - the existing playground equipment will be reused where suitable - and to plant larger shade trees. The park improvement project will be scheduled for completion with the school opening. A separate public engagement process will be conducted for the park improvement, and reported to the Board for design approval and funding allocation.

Staff consider the overhang to be a small intrusion into a large park, outweighed by the positive impacts of creating the community hub and bringing more life to the park.

Prepared by:
Parks
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC

TD/td