



Date: April 18, 2015

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Queen Elizabeth Park Zipline

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the temporary operation of a zipline in Queen Elizabeth Park during the summer of 2015 as a pilot project, under the conditions as outlined in this report.

POLICY

Board approval is required for special events not included on the annual Calendar of Major Special Events and/or that are in variance with one or more Park Board by-laws

BACKGROUND

Queen Elizabeth Park is a 52-hectare park that is home to the Bloedel Conservatory. There are also two landscaped quarry gardens, the arboretum with its collection of exotic and native trees, sculptures, including one by internationally-renowned artist Henry Moore, and diverse recreation offerings such as tennis, lawn bowling, and pitch and putt golf. At 152 meters above sea level, it is the highest point in Vancouver, and this makes for spectacular views of the park, city, and North Shore mountains.

DISCUSSION

Greenheart International approached staff in regards to an opportunity to operate a temporary zipline in Queen Elizabeth Park during the summer of 2015, which marks the 75th Anniversary of the park. Greenheart is a Vancouver based company with extensive experience in the construction and operation of aerial trails such as canopy walks and ziplines. They have several installations around the world, with their local installations including a canopy walk at the UBC Botanical Garden and a zipline in Whistler. Greenheart's focus is on creating attractions that allow both visitors and the local community the chance to experience nature with minimal impact on the environment.

The proposed zipline would operate from a temporary launch tower located on the west side of the Bloedel Conservatory, would travel over the adjacent quarry garden to land on the southwest side of the garden -- a distance of 190 meters (see Appendix A). The zipline would be operated by Greenheart as a pilot project to measure the benefits and impact to Queen Elizabeth Park during the summer of 2015, with a projected operating period of late May through September.

A number of areas have been reviewed to determine potential concerns and requirements:

- Sound generated by the line is under 50 decibels, which would mean it would not be heard from more than 6 meters away;
- Operation would have low impact: only a small footprint required for both the launch and landing area; materials and geodesic design of the structures would blend well with the Bloedel Conservatory; the two small cables, 1” in diameter, would have limited visual impact; storage would be located in the parking lot, away from the operation to minimize disruption and visual impact;
- Location is easy to access via transit and there is parking adjacent to the proposed launch site;
- Operating hours would be similar to the Bloedel Conservatory;
- Greenheart has a served millions of riders around the world with an excellent safety record; harnesses and cables are designed and manufactured specifically for Greenheart and are held to the highest industry standards;
- A City of Vancouver Building Permit would be required, which would further ensure safety standards are met;
- Greenheart would purchase adequate liability insurance and the Park Board would not assume financial risk;
- Opportunities will be available to offer packages to jointly promote the park, Bloedel Conservatory, and the zipline.

It is anticipated the cost to experience the zipline will be in the range of \$15-\$20. The financial return to the Park Board will be based on a percentage of the revenue structure as outlined in the table below:

| Revenue | PB % Return |
|--------------------|-------------|
| \$0 - 75,000 | 0% |
| \$75,001-250,000 | 10% |
| \$250,001- 400,000 | 35% |
| \$400,001 + | 40% |

The zipline will be jointly marketed by the Park Board and Greenheart, with not only a focus on the Bloedel Conservatory and the zipline, but to also increase the profile of Queen Elizabeth Park and all the features and activities available within it.

SUMMARY

Staff recommend this temporary event as it is very low impact, provides an additional activity for visitors to Queen Elizabeth Park, will raise the profile of the park, and provide excellent opportunities to cross market with the Bloedel Conservatory. Visitor and resident feedback will be collected during this pilot project, with both quantitative and qualitative results reported back to the Board in the fall of 2015.

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APPENDIX A Queen Elizabeth Park Zipline - Proposed Site

