



June 17, 2016

**TO:** Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
**FROM:** General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** "SeeSawSeat" Public Art Installation - Sunset Park

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## RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the installation of the artwork "SeeSawSeat" at Sunset Park with all arrangements made to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

## POLICY

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation's Arts Policy states:

- The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation confirms its mandate in the arts and recognizes the arts as an essential element in a vital, creative and balanced city,
- The Board provides a vibrant public realm and supports the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

## BACKGROUND

The Main Street Urban Transportation Showcase Project was initiated in 2006 and supported by TransLink, the City of Vancouver and Transport Canada to make it easy and attractive for the public to walk, cycle, and use transit along Main Street. A public art component was developed and was named "88 BLOCKS • Art on Main."

Germaine Koh was selected through a jury process as one of the artists to design a work for the "88 BLOCKS • Art on Main" project. She created the concept and detailed design plan for a work she titled "SeeSawSeat."

In 2009, Park Board staff was approached regarding the potential siting of "SeeSawSeat" in Sunset Park at the corner of 51<sup>st</sup> and Main Street. At that time Park Board staff and the Public Art Consultant met with Sunset Community Centre Association and reviewed the detailed design plan. The Association, as stakeholders in the adjacent community centre, expressed their support for the project.

Due to a number of delays including the Olympic Public Art program and other external factors, the project was put on hold. The Sunset Association expressed their support again in 2014 and in 2015 when the project was reinvigorated.

## DISCUSSION

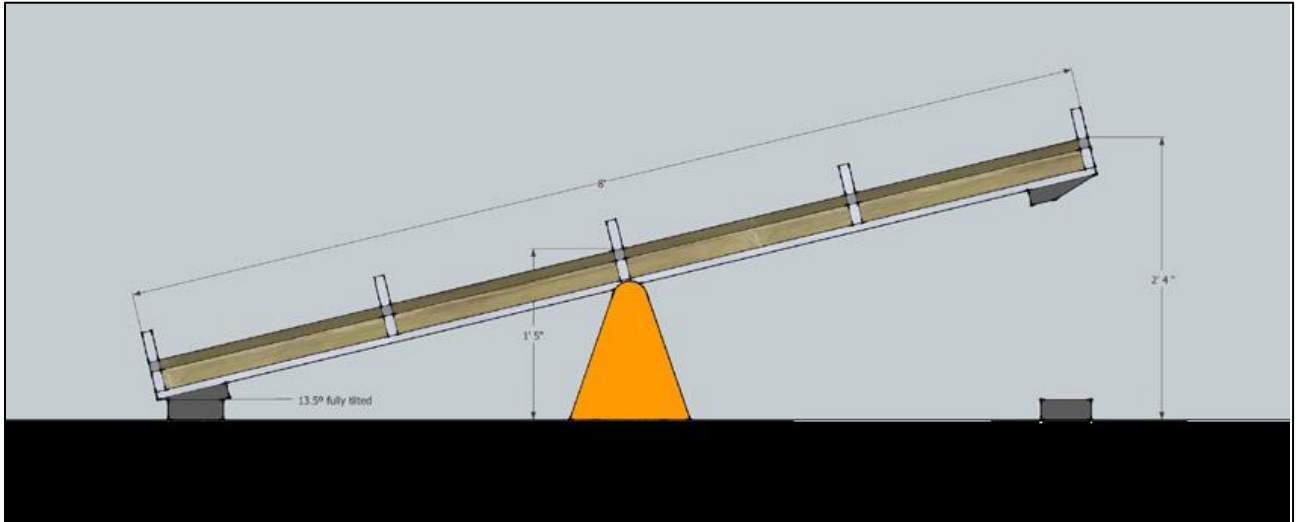
### Project Description

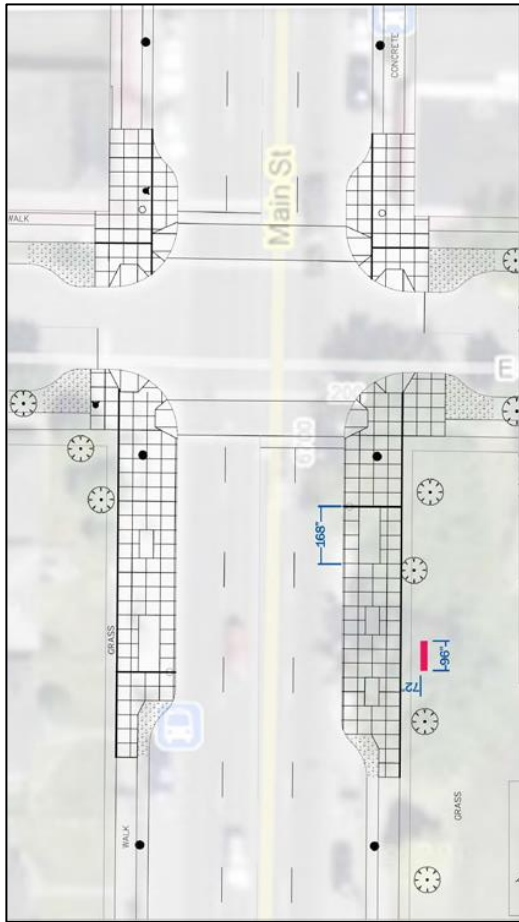
"SeeSawSeat" is a small and playful artwork that resembles the nearby bus shelter bench, but works like a teeter totter.

"This creates a playful situation full of possibilities for interaction and negotiation between members of the public. Uncomfortable when used by only one person, the individuals that

encounter it will soon deduce that it is best experienced with another person, so the seat becomes a tool for playful social exchange.”

*(quote from SeeSawSeat Detailed Design)*





When considering a new commission or donation of artwork intended for installation on park land a number of reviews take place. These include Community Engagement, Technical and Risk Management Reviews and Aesthetic Reviews. These reviews have been successfully completed for the work “SeeSawSeat.”

### Community Engagement

Through consultation on the larger park planning process for Sunset Park which took place over 2 years and involved 18 meetings with local community and staff groups and two major open house events, it has been determined that this corner of the park is not used for other activities either formal or informal. The site is also not indicated for activation in the new park plan. In the case of public art commissions and the proposal to site artworks whose design is complete this is the key question on which we consult with the community.

Consultation with stakeholders was implemented as the standard method for consultation on thematic for donations of existing public artworks. The Sunset Community Centre Association as a stakeholder in the nearby community centre, was consulted and has repeatedly expressed their support for the project.

The Arts, Culture and Engagement Team will work with the artist and public art consultant to develop information signage during installation. This signage is most usually attached to the safety fencing and in this case will also be posted inside the community centre.

The playful nature of this artwork lends itself to activation and engagement activities for public interaction post-installation. Activities will be developed by the Park Board’s Regional Community Arts Programmer in consultation with the artist.

### Technical and Risk Management Review

Staff have completed an initial review of the proposed site, artwork, and installation and are satisfied that it will meet the Park Board’s technical and safety requirements. The piece has been built as a prototype and tested extensively. Engineer’s stamped drawings have been submitted.

As the proposed installation will likely be perceived as play equipment, it was reviewed with the higher standards associated with play elements as per the Z614-14 CSA Children’s playspace guidelines. No potential entrapments or pinch points were identified and a resilient surface will be used around the seat as per the CSA guidelines. Hydraulic dampening of the bench and weighting of the seats will also be considered.

The proposed location was reviewed by Parks Operations in terms of maintenance and the impact of the structure on existing trees. Special consideration will be given to root systems during the installation, with a shallow and wider footing option proposed to reduce conflict

with any major roots. Final details for the installation will be determined by working with planning, operations, and risk management staff.

### **Aesthetic Review**

“SeeSawSeat” has been created by internationally recognized Vancouver artist Germaine Koh.

The quality of Koh’s work and community engagement was recognized by Park Board in 2012 when she was selected by a panel of arts professionals and community members for one of the first Park Board fieldhouse residencies. Her work explores the nature of games and social interactions related to play. Koh created a life-size prototype of “SeeSawSeat” during her residency at Elm Park field house and it has since been exhibited internationally.

Koh was selected as an artist for the “88 BLOCKS • Art on Main” project through a panel process led by arts consultant Maureen Smith. Smith’s public art plan and process was approved by the City’s Public Art Committee through their standard process.

### **Financial Considerations**

Although the proposed location for the “SeeSawSeat” is on park land, there will be no cost to the Park Board. This public artwork was selected through the “88 BLOCKS • Art on Main” project and the City of Vancouver’s Public Art Program will be responsible for all costs related to its creation, installation, and ongoing maintenance.

### **SUMMARY**

This proposal meets the Park Board’s goals for public art in parks, with the location, installation, and design adhering to safety regulations. “SeeSawSeat” is a small but engaging addition to the underutilized bus stop area in the North East corner at Sunset Park that. Staff recommend that the Board accept the art proposal with all arrangements made to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

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