



## Chair's Annual Report 2016 Strategic Accomplishment Highlights

The Vancouver Park Board made significant progress in 2016 toward the four directions of the Strategic Plan and continues to provide high quality parks and recreation services, programs and opportunities to residents and visitors.

### Parks and Recreation for All

#### **New Parks**

The Board opened two new parks, one at Yukon and 17<sup>th</sup>, which features a mini adventure playground, ample seating, gardens, and a unique bike repair station. The other park at 5<sup>th</sup> and Pine is our first “pop-up park” and includes a pollinator garden with 1,500 plants that provide habitat for bees and butterflies, which are necessary for food production and the growth of our urban forest. These parks have not been officially named but our Park Naming Committee will soon find names with help from Vancouver residents.

#### **Playground Renewals**

The Board owns and maintains 159 playgrounds in Vancouver and many have to be replaced due to age and condition. This year, the Board built new playgrounds at McBride and Hastings Mill parks. Playgrounds at Andy Livingstone and Creekside parks are under construction. The Board worked closely with local residents when designing and building these new playgrounds.

#### **Paddling Centre**

A Paddling Centre, whose design is inspired by floating lanterns, opened on False Creek. The facility features six storage buildings for non-motorized boats and paddling equipment, floating docks, and ramps to improve accessibility. The Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Society and BC Mobility Opportunities Society use it as their base.

#### **Richard Saunders Baseball Field**

It's batter-up at two baseball diamonds in Hastings Community Park. The Board upgraded the fields with funding from the PNE and the Jays Care Foundation. Improvements include a new backstop and scoreboard, a levelled field, new sprinkler system, warning track, dugouts and batting cage. The main field was named after long-time league volunteer Richard Saunders, while the rookie baseball field was named Volunteer Field.

#### **Pickleball Courts**

The game of pickleball is growing in popularity. The sport combines elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. To meet demand, the Park Board has transformed one tennis court at Queen Elizabeth Park into a combined tennis/pickleball court. Tennis courts in Memorial Park West and John Hendry Park will be converted in the spring.

#### **Killarney Seniors Centre**

A contract for the design and construction of the Killarney Seniors Centre was approved. The centre addresses a critical service gap for seniors in southeast Vancouver. Construction begins next month.

#### **Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre**

The Board unanimously supported renewal of Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre at its current location in Oak Park. Marpole residents want the new centre to stay in the same place as the current one. The Board hopes to break ground in two years.

### **Access to Services Without Fear**

The Board approved the “Access to Park Board Services Without Fear” policy which supports residents with uncertain or no immigration status who fear detention, psychological or physical harm, or deportation when accessing services. Unless required by law, no information collected about their immigration status will be shared with other agencies.

### **People, Parks, and Dogs: A Strategy for Sharing Vancouver’s Parks**

All residents and visitors, both with and without dogs, should be able to enjoy our parks. To that end, the Board launched “People, Parks, and Dogs: A strategy for sharing Vancouver’s parks”. Early next year, the Board will ask for feedback on preliminary recommendations about the planning, design and management of Vancouver’s parks, beaches, and off-leash areas.

### **VanSplash Aquatics Strategy**

The Board took the first step to improving access to aquatic services with the launch of VanSplash Aquatics Strategy. Public feedback will be used to refine recommendations for a 10-year plan to deliver aquatic services, including the renewal or replacement of existing indoor pools and wading pools, and construction of a new outdoor pool. A new pool will be built in 2018.

### **Swim to Survive**

This year the Board partnered with the Lifesaving Society and Lifeguard Outreach Society to offer Swim to Survive to 600 Vancouver youth. Swim to Survive is a Lifesaving Society program that provides basic training in critical skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. The free course was offered at Kits Pool.

### **ActiveNet**

VanDusen Garden and the three pitch & putt courses were added to the Park Board’s registration system, ActiveNet. The booking experience for the City’s golf courses was also improved with the introduction of a user friendly interface and added flexibility in booking tee times.

### **Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

A contract to develop the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved and awarded. The Master Plan will determine optimum city-wide service level outcomes through an assessment of the needs associated with existing assets and guide operating practices for the next 25 years.

### **Community Centre Association Joint Operating Agreement**

The Board is entering a new chapter in its relationship with community centre associations with the delivery of a revitalized Joint Operating Agreement or JOA, following eight months of facilitated consultations. This renewed JOA affirms the Board’s continued commitment to a community-engaged model working in partnership with associations and clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Board and associations.

### **Accessible Washrooms**

The Board approved a motion to increase accessibility to public washrooms in the parks and recreation system in consultation with various groups, including seniors.

## Leader in Greening

### Urban Forest

Vancouver residents like their trees! The Board sold almost 6,000 trees—flowering, shade and conifer trees for \$10—during sales in the spring and fall. The Board needs residents to help it expand the urban forest. The Board manages trees on parks, streets and other public lands, and advocates for urban forest enhancement on private lands. This year more than 14,000 new trees were planted in Vancouver.

### Biodiversity Strategy: Salt Marsh

Work is now underway on a salt marsh in New Brighton Park to restore fish and wildlife habitat along the shore of Burrard Inlet. The Board approved a concept plan for the creation of this unique two-hectare intertidal wetland. It supports the Board's Biodiversity Strategy to create healthy ecosystems and enhance natural areas throughout the city. The salt marsh is a partnership between the Board and Vancouver Fraser Port Authority. The "Biodiversity Strategy" guides ongoing work to protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity throughout the park system.

### Bird Week

The annual Bird Week took place in May with a variety of free workshops, talks and exhibitions highlighting backyard birds and how to improve their living environment. Birds are visible markers of a healthy ecosystem.

## Engaging people

### Community Partnerships: Survivors Totem Pole

A 27-foot pole carved from a red cedar log from Haida Gwaii was installed during a potlatch ceremony in Pigeon Park in November. The Survivors Totem Pole is a powerful collaboration—three years in the making—between Downtown Eastside First Nations, LGBTQ activists, Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian survivors of racism and injustice. Expert Haida carver Skundaal, Bernie Williams, was the lead on the pole's design and carving.

### Concession Renewal Strategy

A consultation program was conducted to obtain public and stakeholder input into a Concession Renewal Strategy for the network of park and beach concession offerings. Focus groups and surveys were used to collect feedback from 5,000 participants. The consultation findings will inform final recommendations for renewal plans for future food offerings to the public at all Park Board facilities.

### Park Naming

The Board looks after more than 230 parks. Their names - be they Stanley, Ebisu, Emory, or Bobolink - give these spaces character and provide a sense of history, community, and belonging to us all. As new parks are built or acquired, they often end up with a temporary working name. Twenty parks now need a permanent name. The Board launched a park naming process to get suggestions from residents.

### Love Locks Sculpture

Love is in the air at Queen Elizabeth Park. A new love locks sculpture, "Love in the Rain", was installed above the Quarry Garden near Bloedel Conservatory. Many love locks have already been added to the sculpture, which was designed by Vancouver artist Bruce Voyce.

### **First Nations Engagement**

The Board's relationship with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations continues to be strengthened through dialogues about long-term planning for Stanley Park. The one-year anniversary of the new relationship was marked with the ceremonial planting in Stanley Park of three cedar trees gifted from the Board to the Nations. Demonstrating commitment to this enhanced relationship, the Board hired an in-house archaeologist—the first ever employed by a municipal government in Canada.

### **Sport Hosting**

Several major sports events were successfully hosted at Park Board facilities, including the HSBC Canada Sevens Vancouver rugby tournament, Little League Canadian Championship, Americas Masters Games, two Canadian Men's National Soccer Team qualifying matches, a Canadian Men's National Rugby Team international test match, a Vancouver Whitecaps/Crystal Palace FC international soccer friendly, curling championship, and the Subaru 5i50 Vancouver Triathlon.

## **Excellence in Resource Management**

### **Special Events**

An expanded Festival of Lights at VanDusen Botanical Garden enjoyed its most successful year ever in 2015. Almost 110,000 people visited, about 1,000 more than in the previous year. As a result, the event was extended for two weekends in January. Enchanted Nights at Bloedel Conservatory was also well received and was extended to the end of January.

### **Golf Course and Marina Upgrades**

Langara Golf Course and Heather Civic Marina were upgraded. A four-bay warm-up range was installed at Langara Golf Course. At Heather Civic Marina, the "M" float was replaced. The new float is wider, has a higher freeboard, increased amp power in the outlets, and more safety ladders.

### **Innovative New Services: Beach Chairs, Digital Maps, & Events**

The Board is always looking at innovative service offerings. Beach chairs and umbrellas arrived at English Bay Beach in time for summer. The Board awarded a contract for a two-year pilot program to operate a rental service. The Board also launched the first-ever digital version of the Stanley Park map and guide. A new Halloween event called VanDusen Glow in the Garden was successfully launched. More than 8,800 people attended visited the Garden over eight days to see 1,000 illuminated pumpkins.

### **Sustainability**

The VanDusen Garden Visitor Centre became the first project in Vancouver to receive the Living Building Petal Certification – the most stringent measurement of sustainability in the built environment. The Visitor Centre achieved certification in the categories of site, materials, health, and beauty.