



Park Board General Manager's Report May 1, 2017

The following report is intended to provide an overview and update on recent and upcoming activities within the Park Board.

PARK DEVELOPMENT

New Brighton Park Salt Marsh

The salt marsh project is about 90% complete with completion date for final grading, planting, and installation of park features by May 31st. Work has been slower than anticipated this spring because of poor weather. Work on the First Nations cultural interpretation features is also proceeding. The proposed opening of the project is late September 2017.

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Gardens - Pond Renewal

The purpose of this project is to return the pond to its original condition while introducing mechanical systems necessary to maintain the pond's vitality while easing maintenance, as well as to remove invasive plants. This project is behind schedule, due to inclement weather (freezing temperatures throughout the winter and heavy rains this spring). The new target for completion and reopening is June 2017.

To date, the koi fish have been temporarily housed at the Vancouver Aquarium, two turtles have been recovered and protected, and the pond is drained. Contractors are presently working to remove and dispose accumulated material and invasive plants also to repair the clay liner. Closer to the end of the project desirable aquatic plants in submerged planters and a new water recirculation and aeration system will be introduced. We look forward to restoring the pond's jade water aesthetic, a characteristic provided by the clay liner that is integral to the character of the historic site and that is highly prized by the Garden Society.

East Fraserlands Parks - Update

East Fraser Lands (EFL) is being developed by Wesgroup. It will house up to 12,000 new residents in the coming decades and will include 25.2 acres (10.2 ha) of parks within the community - approximately 20% of the land area. From 2017 to 2019 we expect to design and build 8 acres of park space in the western third of EFL, including Foreshore Park, Kinross Park, and Neighbourhood Park South.

Presently, Park staff are working closely with City Senior Management, Engineering Services colleagues, and consultants to study sea level rise implications for the community and for the design of the new parklands. The next Open House is being scheduled for June, following completion of the studies, so that a realistic park design can be presented. This event will be timed with a Saturday Farmer's market in River District.

PARK RESEARCH & PLANNING

Non-Motorized Boating Strategy

A city-wide Non-Motorized Boating Strategy is needed to provide a robust assessment of existing facilities and their water use in order to rationalize future planning. Park Board staff are currently preparing an Request For Proposal (RFP) that will be released in early May, in order to procure a consultant before the end of the summer.



Ireland Canada Monument

Consultants have proposed two design concepts for the installation of a monument in George Wainborn Park to recognize the contributions of Irish Canadians. An opportunity for public feedback was provided for 3 weeks, launched by an Open House held at the Roundhouse Community Centre on April 4, 2017 -- over 40 people attended with positive feedback. Once all feedback has been compiled and reviewed, the preferred design and location will be brought back to the Board for final approval.

Urban Forest Strategy

A staff team of Park Board Research and Planning, Urban Development, and Sustainability are working with Diamond Head Consulting on the development of a strategic summary document to guide urban forest work. This is about 50% complete with completion date of late June. Some components of the strategy were unveiled at the Spring Tree Sale.

Spring Tree Sale

The Park Board held its Spring Tree Sale at Hillcrest Park on April 29 and 30. Approximately 3,000 trees from 26 varieties or species were sold to the public to encourage tree planting on private property. Most of the trees were purchased online, remaining trees were retained for cash sales and sold out by the end of the day. The work is supported by the Planning and Research Group as well as Urban Forestry.

Water Conservation Planning

Water conservation planning and implementation is focusing on four components in 2017: (1) improving, replacing, or closing “once-through” water features such as older fountains to comply with City of Vancouver bylaws; (2) improving irrigation practices in parks; (3) upgrading large water uses such as Charleson Park waterfall; and (4) working with the Park Development Group to ensure water conservation goals are incorporated into park development projects. Staff are also improving data collection and analysis around water use in parks including a new dashboard metric.

RECREATION

Community Centre Association Joint Operating Agreement

New Joint Operating Agreements were distributed to the Community Centre Associations on April 28, 2017. These JOAs were based on the form and amendments approved by the Board on April 10, with appendices customized for each CCA. CCAs will have 5 months to review and sign their new JOA, which will take effect on January 1, 2018.

Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre Renewal

Staff are undertaking the renewal and expansion of community facilities in Marpole. Park Board is leading a community engagement process to validate the site and consider needs for the new community centre, in the context of the Marpole Community Plan and newly emerging Arbutus Corridor project. This is preliminary work ahead of the detailed design process, focusing on high level service review and siting. The community engagement outcomes will provide clear direction on how best to provide recreation services in the Marpole area.



Creekside Community Centre Association

Staff have drafted a plan for the development of a Community Centre Association at Creekside Community Recreation Centre. First steps include establishing an advisory committee by January 2018 and then working with that committee to determine the structure for the 2019 budget cycle. Acceptance of the new JOA by existing CCAs will be essential in finalizing development of the Creekside CCA.

Strathcona Community Centre Funding Model

Work has begun on developing a funding model for the Strathcona Community Centre Association. Staff have met with Association members and are moving forward on developing an interim funding model, as well longer term strategies that could also support other centres with similar funding challenges. Options will be reported back to the Board.

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

False Creek Waterways

In response to a Board motion, staff explored the possibility of temporarily restricting access to certain areas of False Creek during the 2017 Dragon Boat Festival. Currently, it is not possible to restrict temporary anchoring or access for events on False Creek as it is an open waterway under the Canada Shipping Act and must be available to all waterway users. Commercial Operations staff met with Transport Canada to discuss challenges associated with motorized and non-motorized activities in False Creek. The meeting resulted in a commitment from all parties to pro-actively work on short and long term solutions that will achieve a balance between the needs of the various user groups, including the possibility of amending current legislation and regulations, as well as developing a timeline to collaboratively update the current memorandum of understanding.

Cetaceans at the Vancouver Aquarium

As directed by the Board at their Special Meeting on March 9, 2017, an amendment to the Parks Control by-law that governs cetaceans in Vancouver parks will be brought forward for Board enactment on May 15, 2017.

COMMUNICATIONS

Management of 4/20 Protest Event - Sunset Beach Park

The 4/20 protest event included coordination with Park Board Special Events staff and Park Rangers on neighbourhood notification, social media response, and handling the high volume of media requests. Follow-up news releases were issued on April 21 to inform Vancouver residents of the impacts to the field and public space. Efforts to relocate the event for 2018 are underway. Damage to the park is still being assessed.

Bird Week and City Bird

Our social media strategist is providing support to Bird Week partners and to city colleagues for the campaign to choose a permanent City Bird from a slate of 4 candidates: Anna's Hummingbird, Northern Flicker, Spotted Towhee, & Varied Thrush. The campaign launched on April 27, with the announcement of reigning City Bird to occur on May 16. Bird Week events run May 7 to 13.



Stanley Park and Vancouver Park Maps Refresh

Communications staff are working with designers on a refresh of our popular Stanley Park and Vancouver Parks maps, including improving information on accessibility. The targeted distribution date will be in early June.

VanSpring Instagram Campaign

The VanSpring campaign is in full bloom and aims to grow Park Board's Instagram channel. Instagram users are asked to follow us and submit their spring experiences in Vancouver for weekly prize draw. Check out @VanParkBoard on Instagram.

Park Board Media Program by the Numbers (2016)

- Number of media interactions: 815 (Comparative: Community Services: 1000 Engineering: 859)
- Hot Topics:
 - #1 Parks/Destination Parks, 36% of total
 - #2 Tree Issues/ Biodiversity, 12% of total
 - #3 Cetaceans, 7% of total
- Number of news releases: 42 (Comparative: Citywide =247)
- Number of media events: 20 (Comparative: Citywide =61)
- The top users of Park Board media services are CBC, Vancouver Sun, Global. CBC is by far the most frequent user of Park Board media with twice as many calls as Global journalists.