



April 21, 2017

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Water Bike Rental Service at Vanier Park - Pilot Program Contract Award

RECOMMENDATION

- A. **THAT** the Vancouver Park Board approve a two-year pilot program for BC Water Bikes Ltd. to operate a water bike rental service at Vanier Park;
- B. **THAT** the Vancouver Park Board authorize staff to negotiate, to the satisfaction of the Park Board's General Manager and the City's Director of Legal Services, and enter into a license agreement with BC Water Bikes Ltd. for an initial term of two (2) years, with the option to renew for an additional term of two (2) years; and
- C. **THAT** no legal rights or obligations shall arise and no consents, permissions, or licenses are granted hereby and none shall arise or be granted hereafter unless and until all contemplated legal documentation has been executed and delivered by all parties.

POLICY

The Vancouver Park Board approves use of all lands under its jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

Water biking is a popular aquatic activity available at many park and beach destinations worldwide. These operations are generally welcomed and compatible with waterfront spaces since they're non-motorized and support healthy and active lifestyles. A water bike rental service will add vibrancy to Vancouver's waterfront and enhance visitor experiences by:

- Providing a valued/appreciated service; and
- Improving overall convenience (through the onsite availability of high quality equipment to support water biking activities).

In 2016, a limited water bike rental service was operated at Vanier Park by BC Water Bikes Ltd. under the Park Board's private recreation permit program. This framework allowed for the operator to provide pre-booked water bike classes and tours, but did not enable BC Water Bikes Ltd. to accommodate walk-up/hourly rentals or provide other value-added services. The experience proved popular and the operator has expressed interest in incrementally growing this service to include walk-up/hourly rentals and other value-added services.

With a mandate to further activate Vancouver's parks and beaches, provide added value for visitors as part of the park and beach experience, and generate new revenue streams to support Vancouver's vast and globally recognized park system, an expanded water bike rental service pilot program provides a good opportunity for the Park Board to test this concept

further and determine its overall market appeal, value, and viability for both the operator and the Park Board.

Due to its popularity, existing dock infrastructure, and proximity to Vancouver's downtown core/tourism hub, Vanier Park has been identified as an ideal pilot program location to deliver this new amenity and service for both residents and tourists alike.

DISCUSSION

RFEOI Process

A Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) was developed and released on March 10, 2017, seeking proposals from qualified vendors interested in offering a seasonal service as part of a two-year pilot program at Vanier Park. The RFEOI was distributed directly to several organizations, and notification of the opportunity was published on the City of Vancouver's website.

One detailed proposal was received and evaluated by Park Board staff. Key evaluation criteria included:

- Proposed business concept (including approach, service delivery personnel, and innovative ideas);
- Company track record and relevant experience;
- Financial capability; and
- Ability to meet Park Board/City requirements and alignment with Park Board/City sustainability goals.

Successful Proponent

Through this process, BC Water Bikes Ltd. was identified as the successful proponent. BC Water Bikes Ltd. is a Canadian-owned tourism/hospitality company with exclusive rights to a specific hydrobike technology in British Columbia (see Appendix A). The company's principal, Shawn Kennedy, has been active in the tourism/hospitality industry for over 12 years and was nominated in 2011 for a customer service excellence award through the Vancouver Tourism Awards Program. For the past two years, the company has conducted water bike operations in Vancouver and Victoria.

Key Proposal Components

- Term - Recognizing that this is a pilot program, the term of the agreement will be for two (2) years, with the option to renew for an additional term of two (2) years.
- Fee - BC Water Bikes Ltd. will pay the Vancouver Park Board a % of gross annual revenues commensurate with market standards.
- Scope of Services - For the 2017 and 2018 seasons, BC Water Bikes will offer a variety of rental and tour product options, as well as other related and value-added services.
- Delivery Model/Approach - In order to minimize the footprint of the service and preserve the natural setting of Vanier Park, BC Water Bikes Ltd. will operate a fully mobile service using a 10' x 10' mobile tent that will be set-up and taken down daily. When requested by customers, BC Water Bike Ltd. employees will launch and retrieve water bikes from one of the existing floating docks at Vanier Park (see Appendix B for an outline of the service delivery area). The exact location of the tent and dock area to

be used will be determined in collaboration with Park Board staff; the service will not have exclusive or reserved access to any dock space.

- Pricing - Pricing for the service has not yet been finalized but will be commensurate with similar services in other markets/jurisdictions. It is anticipated that customers will be able to select from a variety of pricing options (e.g. hourly, half-day, full-day, and evening rates).

Other Considerations

Expanding water bike rental activities through this pilot program aligns strongly with Vancouver's Tourism Master Plan, which identifies aquatic tourism as a key growth opportunity area for the city. Implementation of the pilot program has also been reviewed and unanimously endorsed by the Park Board's Marketing & Business Development Advisory Committee.

SUMMARY

The proposed pilot program will introduce a new and valued service, enhance visitor experiences, and deliver additional activity options at a popular Vancouver waterfront location. BC Water Bikes Ltd. meets the key requirements necessary to operate this water bike rental service at Vanier Park and staff are confident that the service can be delivered as intended. Accordingly, staff recommend that the Board approve this pilot program and authorize staff to negotiate and enter into a license agreement with BC Water Bikes Ltd. as outlined in this report.

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Example of BC Water Bikes Equipment



Service Delivery Area at Vanier Park

