



Park Ranger Funding & Safety – Report Back

Regular Park Board Meeting
Monday, November 6, 2017



The purpose of this presentation is to respond to the “Park Rangers Funding and Safety” motion referred to staff to provide an estimated cost to enable 24-hour-a-day Park Ranger patrols, and clarification regarding whether the Ranger responsibilities would be altered as a result of implementing overnight patrols.

- Opioid crisis and homeless challenges significantly impacting many urban parks;
- Increasing community concerns re: park safety and cleanliness
 - discarded used needles
 - homeless encampments
- Responding to concerns has required additional and re-directed resources

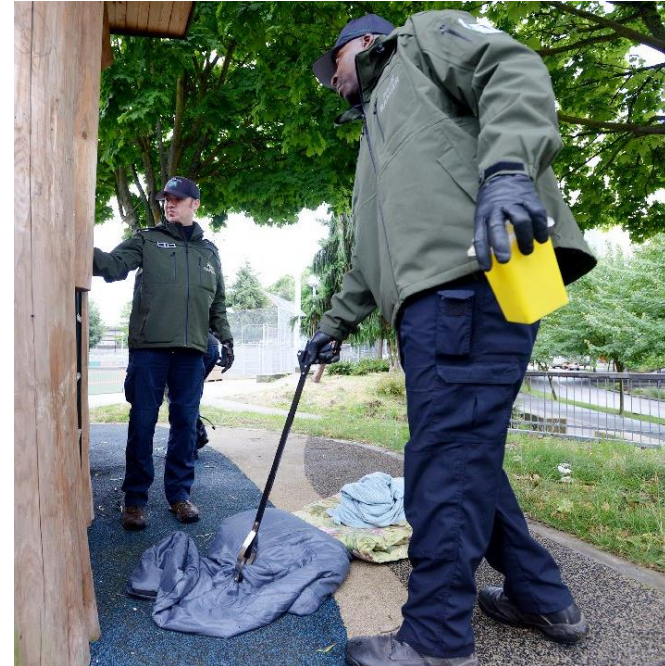


Considerable efforts made in 2017 to improve park maintenance, safety, & security:

- Increased presence at parks most impacted by drug use and homeless encampments
- New Ranger station and dedicated patrols in Andy Livingstone Park;
- Additional service to Creekside/Andy Livingstone playgrounds and washrooms



- Park Rangers support & respond to a broad range of park events, activities, and issues in all parks city wide;
- Increasing time spent on public safety concerns:
 - removing needles from parks (~ 40/day);
 - enforcing Parks Control By-laws;
 - dealing with structures & encampments (1945 homeless related cases in 2017);
 - helping connect individuals with support services.



Current Park Ranger Service Model

- Additional 2017 funding increased regular Ranger positions from 5 to 12;
- Coverage provided from 7am to midnight, 7 days per week;
- Temporary agreement with Engineering Streets to manage encampments in 6 DTES parks 5 days/week;
- Temporary agreement for 2 Security Attendants to service playgrounds & washrooms 5 days/week.



- Adding minimum of 2 overnight Ranger patrols would require equivalent of 6 RFT positions; estimated cost = \$485,000/year;
 - Costs related to dispatch & supervision to be determined once expectation of overnight role clarified.
- Limited range of activities and interventions can be safely executed at night; possible duties could include:
 - Identify problematic areas & deliver information to morning crews;
 - report criminal activity to the Vancouver Police Department;
 - secure public bathroom facilities; and
 - engage in low risk public interactions.

Other Considerations

- Morning is the most effective time to clear encampments & needles;
- Initiatives introduced in 2017 still require assessment;
- Park Security Plan review will consider role of Park Rangers;
- Challenges re: homelessness in parks are complex; legal issues require proper analysis;
- Cross-jurisdictional concerns require further consultation and collaboration.



- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board receive the information outlined in this report in response to the referred motion titled “Park Ranger Funding and Safety”;
- B. THAT the Board direct staff to develop a comprehensive and sustainable Park Ranger Service Model, in consultation and collaboration with the Vancouver Police Department, City of Vancouver, and community partners, to address safety, security, cleanliness and maintenance concerns, particularly in relation to the increased use of injectable drugs in Vancouver parks;

- C. THAT staff continue to liaise with City of Vancouver and community partners to explore ways in which the Park Board can assist in efforts to locate appropriate housing and support for those struggling with mental health and addiction challenges; and
- D. THAT staff report back to the Board **by June** 2018 with recommendations that include considerations for financial, legal, and cross-jurisdictional issues, and

- E. THAT the Vancouver Park Board continue a service agreement with the City's Engineering Streets division to assist with key problem parks, as well as additional security attendants in Andy Livingstone and Creekside Parks in 2018, and further that costs be supported through a funding request to the City of Vancouver or through the Park Board's 2018 Operating Budget.