



July 16, 2019

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Bloedel Conservatory 50th Anniversary Celebration - Program & Funding

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the 50th Anniversary Celebration Program that has been designed and developed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Bloedel Conservatory; and
- B. FURTHER THAT the Board approve the contribution of up to \$50,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund for the implementation and delivery of the Bloedel Conservatory's 50th Anniversary Celebration Program.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Bloedel Conservatory will celebrate its 50th anniversary on December 6, 2019. To commemorate this important milestone, Park Board staff have developed and are proposing to deliver a 50th Anniversary Celebration Program consisting of three core activities – a public awareness and recognition campaign (to run from September 2019 to January 2020), a tropical-themed evening gala event (on December 6, 2019), and an extended edition of Holiday Heights, the Conservatory's winter lighting event (which will run from December 7, 2019 to January 5, 2020). The purpose of this report is to present the Park Board's proposed 50th Anniversary Celebration Program to the Board, review complementing initiatives to be delivered by the Vancouver Botanical Garden Association ("VBGA"), and obtain the Board's approval to use \$50,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to deliver the Park Board's celebration program.

POLICY

The Board's policy on the approved use of Corporate Sponsorship funds contains the following criteria:

- To fund one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will support revenue generating activities and the money repaid into the Corporate Sponsorship account from the increased revenues within a period of three years;
- To fund initiatives with one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will result in improved efficiencies; and
- To fund one time expenditures over and above the existing funding level in the operating budget which are beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system.

All expenditures from the Corporate Sponsorship fund require Board Approval.

BACKGROUND

The Bloedel Conservatory is one of Vancouver's crown jewels and a popular attraction for both Vancouverites and tourists to the City. Opened on December 6, 1969, the facility provides educational and interactive opportunities to learn about and engage with unique varieties of tropical plants and birds. Strategic marketing activities, improved outreach, and the introduction of new and unique horticultural features, such as the rare corpse flower and tree echiums, have combined to grow attendance and engagement considerably over the past three years. In 2018, the Conservatory welcomed over 180,000 visitors, establishing a modern-day attendance record.

Since 2015, the Park Board has produced and delivered a winter holiday event at the Conservatory that begins in mid-December and runs into early January (Holiday Heights at Bloedel). The event provides guests with an opportunity to create memories with friends and families in a unique tropical setting with holiday-themed décor, lighting, horticultural elements, photo opportunities, music, entertainment, and activities. Holiday Heights at Bloedel attracted almost 30,000 visitors in 2018.

The Park Board has a history of celebrating major milestones at signature parks, gardens, and facilities. Past commemorative programs include Stanley Park's 125th Anniversary (2013), Queen Elizabeth Park's 75th Anniversary (2015), and VanDusen Botanical Garden's 40th Anniversary (2015).

DISCUSSION

With the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Conservatory later this year, Park Board staff are proposing to commemorate this milestone with a 50th Anniversary Celebration Program consisting of three key deliverables:

Public awareness/recognition campaign – To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the conservatory, an anniversary logo has been developed and will be featured in key marketing and promotional assets/initiatives to generate public awareness and recognition of Bloedel's anniversary milestone, including street banners along Cambie Street, large signage displays at the two main entrances to Queen Elizabeth Park (Cambie Street and Midlothian Avenue), onsite signage at the Conservatory (banners, window wraps, etc.), and the introduction of branded merchandise to be sold through the Conservatory gift shop (see Appendix A for preliminary design elements). This component of the program will require an estimated budget of \$45,000.

Gala Evening Event – On Friday, December 6, 2019, Park Board Commissioners, Conservatory advocates/supporters, media influencers and other guests will be invited to a special anniversary celebration with tropical-themed décor, food, beverages, and entertainment. This evening event will provide an opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary milestone, increase awareness and engagement for the Conservatory, and promote the Holiday Heights at Bloedel event. This evening celebration will require a budget of approximately \$50,000.

Holiday Heights at Bloedel – This year's annual Holiday Heights event at Bloedel will feature a special tropical theme, introduce new décor elements, and operate for an extended period (from December 7, 2019 to January 5, 2020). In commemoration of Bloedel's 50th anniversary, the event will open one week earlier than in past years to allow

more Vancouverites and visitors to enjoy Bloedel during the holiday season. Holiday Heights will continue to be an affordable, family-friendly holiday event in the city and will include themed lighting, décor, special horticultural features, photo opportunities, music, and other activities. The additional one week extension of the event and introduction of new décor features will require a budget of roughly \$30,000.

The cumulative cost of the Park Board's 50th Anniversary Celebration Program is estimated at \$125,000. To offset the costs of this program, staff are seeking Board approval to use up to \$50,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund. It is anticipated that the remaining \$75,000 program cost will be covered by the Park Board's operating budget. The VBGA, the Park Board's joint operating partner at VanDusen and Bloedel, has signaled a willingness to contribute to the street banner program to reduce the financial impact to the Park Board.

In addition to the Park Board's own 50th Anniversary Celebration Program, the VBGA will also be hosting a number of events to commemorate Bloedel's 50th anniversary, including:

Celebration Event – a ticketed event for 100-150 people will be held in the Conservatory on October 18, 2019; this initiative will occur after normal operating hours, thereby avoiding any restrictions to public access;

Commemorative Booklet – a 64-page commemorative booklet will be published to highlight the history of the Conservatory;

Donor Dinner – on November 28, the VBGA will host its 2nd annual Alma Society dinner for major donors at Seasons in the Park Restaurant, located across from the Bloedel Conservatory;

Program Series – starting on November 14, 2019, a three-part series featuring speakers, art exhibition, and fashion show will be delivered at VanDusen.

CONSIDERATIONS

The following initiatives were reviewed and considered but have not been included in the Park Board's proposed 50th Anniversary Celebration Program due to their anticipated cost:

Epiphyte Arch Project – this horticultural initiative would involve the construction of an Epiphyte Arch complete with an integrated and supporting plant collection; the project is anticipated to cost up to \$250,000 and would introduce a new horticultural attraction in the Conservatory; the VBGA has indicated that it would be open to supporting a portion of the project cost should this initiative proceed;

Plaza Fountain Lighting Project – this initiative would involve upgrading the current lighting infrastructure that supports the Queen Elizabeth Park fountains to a programmable LED-based system; moving in this direction would enable the fountain lights in the plaza to be coordinated with the lighting activities at the Conservatory, thereby enhancing visitor experiences and enabling Bloedel and Queen Elizabeth Park to have more meaningful participation in seasonal and cause-based lighting initiatives; the cost to pursue this upgrade is estimated at between \$250,000 and \$350,000 (these figures do not include required water piping modifications).

These initiatives could be added to Bloedel's 50th Anniversary Celebration Program should the Board wish to pursue them. Delivery of these initiatives would be subject to vendor/supplier availability and timelines. Since neither of these projects are currently contemplated in the

2019-2022 Capital Plan, a reprioritization of existing capital funding would be required to fund either, or both initiatives.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to Board approval, Park Board staff will work to finalize event plans and deliver the 50th Anniversary Celebration Program elements outlined above.

CONCLUSION

The Park Board has a history of celebrating major milestones for its signature parks, gardens, and facilities. On December 6, 2019, the Bloedel Conservatory will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. To commemorate this special occasion, Park Board staff are proposing delivery of a 50th Anniversary Celebration Program and seeking approval to use up to \$50,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to offset the costs of this program. This milestone will also be commemorated with events hosted by the Vancouver Botanical Garden Association. Park Board staff have carefully considered the various aspects of this initiative and are confident that this celebratory program can be delivered successfully and as intended. Accordingly, staff recommend that the Board approve the recommendations outlined in this report.

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Bloedel 50th Anniversary Celebration Program – Preliminary Design Elements

ANNIVERSARY LOGO



STREET BANNERS



Bloedel 50th Anniversary Celebration Program – Preliminary Design Elements

QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK ENTRANCE SIGNAGE



Bloedel 50th Anniversary Celebration Program – Preliminary Design Elements

BRANDED MERCHANDISE

