



October 9, 2019

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Scotiabank Vancouver Half Marathon & 5K – Special Event

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve a request from the Canada Running Series, organizers of the Scotiabank Vancouver Half Marathon & 5K event, to modify its 5K route and race time in Stanley Park to improve safety and accessibility, on Sunday, June 28, 2020, between 6:30am and 9:30am, with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager of the Park Board.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Scotiabank Vancouver Half Marathon and 5K run is a recurring family-friendly event, organized by the Canada Running Series (CRS), which attracts approximately 6,700 participants annually. The Half Marathon starts at UBC, winds its way through the westside of Vancouver, and finishes near Second Beach in Stanley Park; the 5K event takes place entirely within Stanley Park, historically utilizing a loop course around Lost Lagoon, and finishes in the same area as the Half Marathon. For 2020, the organizers are seeking to modify the route and time of the 5K event to improve participant safety and accessibility; accommodating this change will require a closure of select roadways in Stanley Park to vehicular traffic for a short period of time on the morning of the event day. The purpose of this report is to present the CRS event to the Park Board, review the organizer's application for a proposed route change, and seek the Board's approval for the request.

BOARD AUTHORITY / POLICY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over park land use in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs, activities, fees, and improvements that occur within designated parks.

As informed by the [Special Event Policy & Guidelines](#) approved by the Board in December 2003, as well as current practices, Park Board approval is required for special events not included in the Annual Calendar of Major Special Events and/or that are in variance with one or more Park Board by-laws.

On May 13, 2019, the Board [directed staff to update the aforementioned policy and guidelines](#). Concurrent with this direction, the Board also instructed staff to maintain and support the Park Board's current portfolio of commercial events and activities, but issued a moratorium on the introduction of any new commercial initiatives until after the Special Event Policy & Guidelines have been updated and approved by the Board. This application is not impacted by that decision since the Scotiabank Vancouver Half Marathon & 5K event is an existing and not-for-profit event.

BACKGROUND

The Canada Running Series is a not-for-profit organization that organizes premier running events throughout Canada which engage runners of all ages and levels. As part of its mission, CRS is committed to fostering sustainable communities through healthy lifestyles and building communities through the sport of running. Since its inception in 1999, CRS has gained international recognition for its operations and innovation, attracted more than 65,000 participants annually to its events, and raised over \$6 million for 300+ charities. In addition to the Scotiabank Vancouver Half Marathon and 5K event, the Canada Running Series also organizes the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon and the Athletics Canada National Marathon Championships.

Since its inauguration in 1999, the Scotiabank Vancouver Half Marathon and 5K have been held jointly in June of each year. The events take place in the City of Vancouver and Stanley Park. Between 1999 and 2003, the Half Marathon route in Stanley Park used the western half of the seawall finishing at Lumberman's Arch, while the 5K event used a loop route amongst the trails adjacent to the finish line. In 2003, the Half Marathon route in Stanley Park was moved off narrow sections of the seawall for safety reasons, and the finish line was moved from Lumberman's Arch to an area near Second Beach. In a coordinated move, the 5K route was modified to use a loop course around Lost Lagoon, and also end at the Second Beach area finish line. In 2007, after the Air India Memorial was introduced at Second Beach, the finish line for both events was moved east along Park Drive to its current location north of the Stanley Park Lawn Bowling Club.

DISCUSSION

Over the years, a number of safety and accessibility issues related to the 5K event have been flagged for attention, including congestion at pinch points that are too narrow for large groups of runners to navigate safely, potential conflicts with cyclists on the route, gravel pathways that limit accessibility for wheelchairs and strollers, and the risk of delayed medical and emergency response due to route congestion.

For 2020, the Canada Running Series is seeking permission to modify the 5K route and race time to address these issues. Specifically, the organizers are proposing to move significant portions of the 5K route onto roadways within Stanley Park (see Appendix A), which would require the impacted roadways in the park to be closed to vehicular traffic for a short period of time early in the morning. These roadway closures would be supported by traffic management plan, thereby complying with Vancouver Police Department and City of Vancouver traffic management branch requirements. In order to minimize impacts to park stakeholders and users, the 5K event would also take place earlier in the day between 6:30 and 9:30am (in previous years, the 5K event took place between 8:00 and 11:00am). If approved, the requested changes are expected to:

- Improve runner safety by providing a wider course with fewer pinch points;
- Improve accessibility for participants with disabilities by having a fully paved course;
- Upgrade access for medical and emergency response; and
- Accommodate potential future growth opportunities (both participation and fundraising).

The proposed course for the 2020 5K event and its related roadway impacts are summarized below:

- Start and travel northbound on Pipeline Road;
- Turn southbound on Park Drive;
- Transition to the seawall at the HMCS Discovery;
- Exit the seawall and transition to park pathway south of Lost Lagoon;
- Join the Half Marathon finish line at Second Beach by Stanley Park Brewing;
- Close Stanley Park Drive, Avison Way and Pipeline Road at 6:30am;
- Maintain staff and stakeholder access until 7:30am; and
- Reopen all roads at 9:30am.

CONSIDERATIONS

This proposal has been reviewed and conditionally approved by Stanley Park stakeholders and key Festival Expediting Staff Team (FEST) Committee members, including the Vancouver Police Department, City of Vancouver traffic management branch, and the Park Board and City of Vancouver's special events departments.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to Board approval of this application, Park Board staff will work with the organizer and the FEST Committee to develop the required event plans (e.g. traffic management, access control, public safety, stakeholder relations, etc.) which will be reviewed and approved by staff.

CONCLUSION

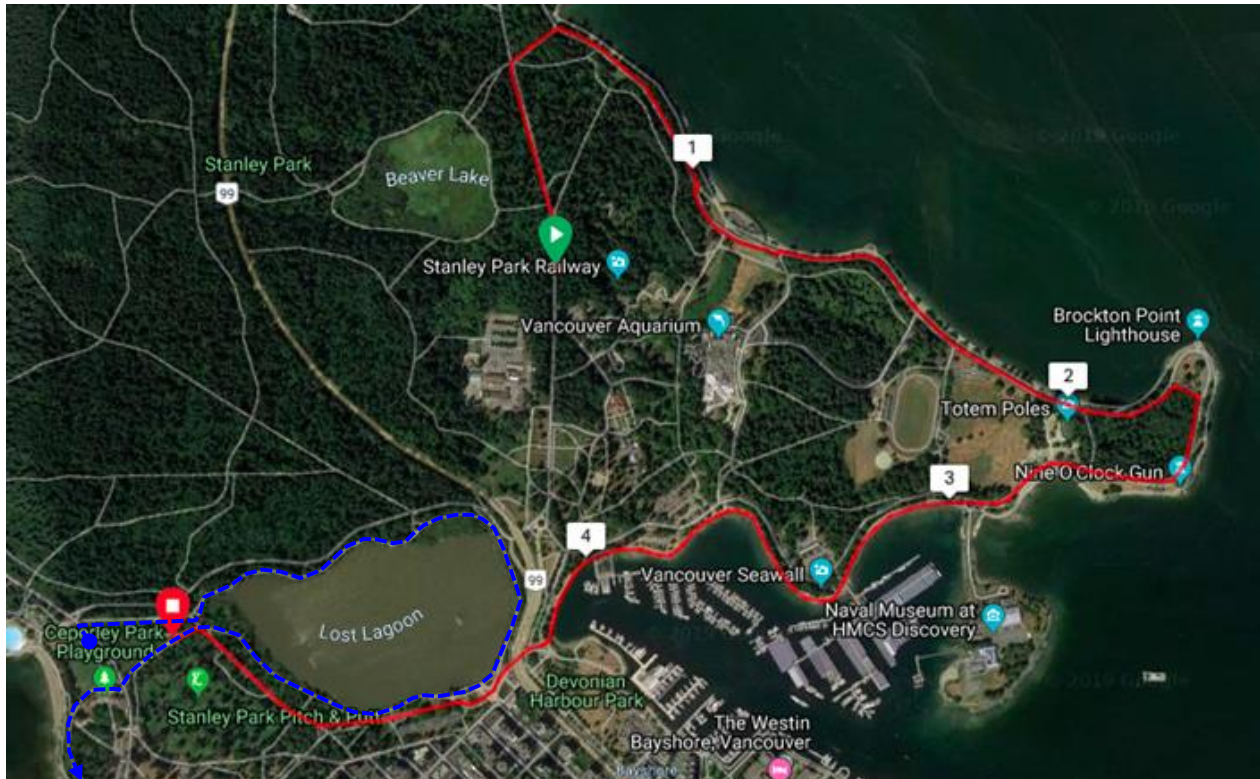
The Scotiabank Vancouver Half Marathon and 5K is a popular and recurring annual family-friendly summer event that brings together the running community, promotes healthy living and inclusivity, and adds vibrancy to our city. The request from the organizer represents an attempt to incrementally build on increasing interest and participation from runners of all abilities and levels, and improve runner experience by providing a safer and more inclusive route. Staff have carefully reviewed this application and are confident that this initiative can be delivered as intended and with minimal impact to Stanley Park stakeholders and users. Accordingly, staff recommend that the Board approve this application as outlined above.

General Manager's Office
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Scotiabank Vancouver Half Marathon & 5K – Proposed New Route for 5K Event



Legend:

- - - - 2019 5K Event Route
- Proposed 2020 5K Event Route