



June 15, 2023

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy as outlined in this report and attached in Appendix A.

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present a new policy to address exclusive use of park space by childcare operators to support new or expanded group childcare programs in existing community centres. Specifically, the policy relates to granting exclusive use of a defined area of park space during certain hours to meet provincial and City childcare licensing requirements for group childcares while balancing the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (“Park Board”)’s core mandate to provide public access to parks. This will provide opportunity for new full day spaces to be developed in existing community centres.

The Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy (the “CCCUPS Policy”) establishes the criteria staff will use to consider an application and outlines the operational factors including terms around hours of exclusive use. The development of this policy was a direct outcome of the Community Centre Strategy.

BOARD AUTHORITY, POLICY, PREVIOUS DECISIONS/UPDATES

Vancouver Charter – Per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (Park Board) has exclusive jurisdiction and control over all areas designated as permanent and temporary parks in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within those parks. The Park Board also has custody, care and management powers and responsibilities to varying degrees for other park areas in the City as determined by Council.

VanPlay - On October 19, 2020, the Park Board approved the [VanPlay Framework](#) for Vancouver’s [Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan](#). VanPlay sets priorities and provides tools and policies to support the pursuit of equity, connectivity and access to parks and recreation for all.

Vancouver Citywide Community Centre Strategy - On April 25, 2022, the Park Board approved Vancouver’s [Community Centre Strategy](#) (“CCS”). The CCS outlines a process for planning and delivery of major community centre projects, and provides recommendations and guidance across key areas of community centre service delivery and planning.

City of Vancouver Childcare Strategy - In June 2022, City of Vancouver Council approved [“Making Strides: Vancouver’s Childcare Strategy”](#) (the “Childcare Strategy”). This City of

Vancouver Strategy references and aligns itself with the Park Board's Community Centre Strategy's approach to childcare, and notes that a significant number of childcare spaces are located in or adjacent to community centres operated by Vancouver's Board of Parks and Recreation. The Childcare Strategy directs City staff to work with Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to support policy development guiding shared outdoor space access for childcare operations in parks.

BACKGROUND

Recent analysis conducted by the City and other partner organizations has identified the need for more childcare spaces in Vancouver. Most community centres in Vancouver are operated by the Park Board in cooperation with Community Centre Associations ("CCAs") under joint operating agreements (JOA). The Park Board and CCAs are seen as key public partners in supporting the expansion of childcare provision and all of the community centres under the JOA include childcare programming. This includes licensed childcare spaces which are predominantly preschool and out of school care and a smaller number of full day group childcare spaces.

Park Board staff work with CCAs and colleagues at the City (Arts, Culture, and Community Services – ACCS) to balance the integration of childcare programming and facilities with the community's parks and recreation needs.

Child Care Requirements (outdoor and indoor space)

Group childcare centres are provincially regulated through the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#), with municipal regulations defined in the [City of Vancouver's Childcare Design Guidelines](#).

These regulations outline technical design specifications for childcare facilities, including specific minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements and configurations, based on the licensed maximum number of children in care. This includes requirements for dedicated outdoor spaces for the exclusive use of childcare programs.

VanPlay

VanPlay includes a goal to [protect existing parks and recreation spaces from loss, encroachment and densification](#). A foundational task is to set clear policy by articulating clear guidelines, principles and processes for proposals in and adjacent to parks as well as Key Direction to Welcome Everyone and Bold Move to listen, learn and co-create to understand and meet community needs.

Community Centre Strategy

The Community Centre Strategy (CCS) includes a goal to "Consider co-location of group child care and integration of other child care programs into community centres where feasible while balancing all parks and recreation needs."

Recognizing scarce public land and resources, the Community Centre Strategy Target #13 specifies that co-location opportunities should be optimized.

The CCS directs Park Board staff to "Develop policy to address CCA requests for dedicated use of park space to support new at grade group child care programs in existing community centres for Board consideration." This CCCUPS Policy is intended to meet this direction.

Note that other actions stemming from this CCS goal are being addressed through ongoing work with the City and CCAs, including locating group child care in new and renewed community

centres above grade or on the roof level so that outdoor play areas do not reduce public access to park area at ground level.

DISCUSSION

Parks contribute to the social fabric of the City by providing free public access to open space. Designating areas for exclusive use by specific groups reduces the overall amount of park space available to the broader community. This Policy is intended to balance the Park Board's responsibility to provide public space with the opportunity to support provision of non-profit child care. This Policy will allow existing community centres not slated for renewal in the short term to expand their full day licensed childcare programming.

The CCCUPS Policy will allow Park Board staff to process requests from childcare operators in community centres for exclusive use of community centre-adjacent park space, to achieve outdoor space licensing requirements for new or expanded group child care programs within existing community centres under a set of consistent criteria. The CCCUPS Policy is focused only on the outdoor space, as the changes to indoor space are regulated under existing processes and legislation. Proposals reviewed under this policy will only be considered if they are in support of an ongoing proposal for indoor space design and programming changes.

The CCCUPS Policy has been developed in response to requests by CCAs but could also apply to third party childcare operators in community centres whose leases or licenses are directly with the Park Board.

The CCCUPS Policy was informed by input from the City of Vancouver's Arts, Culture, and Community Services department and the provincial licensing authority.

POLICY

The CCCUPS Policy is attached to this report as Appendix A: Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy.

This policy will allow staff to assess proposals for compliance with planning, design criteria and operational and administrative requirements on a consistent basis. Where a proposal is conditionally approved by Park Board staff under the CCCUPS Policy, a community notification process will be undertaken by posting site signage for a period of two weeks. This process will be coordinated by Park Board staff and any community input received will be considered in the final review of the application.

Proposals in compliance with the CCCUPS Policy and where criteria have been agreed to in writing by the applicant will then be presented to the General Manager of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (the "General Manager") for consideration and decision; however, any lease or licence required to be granted as part of the application may be subject to the further approval of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, in their sole discretion.

General Manager approval of an application under the CCCUPS Policy would allow the applicant to proceed with the design of the outdoor space to, at a minimum, the Park Board's Park Development standards. The design of the outdoor space will be subject to approval by the General Manager.

Legal agreements with the proposed site operator may be required prior to work being commenced on the construction of the outdoor space for proposed childcare use. The type of documentation and approvals process will be based on City and Park Board policy and practices at the time the application is processed under this policy. Any lease or licence required may be subject to the further approval of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation pursuant to sections 488 and 490 of the Vancouver Charter.

CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

This CCCUPS Policy will increase childcare options for families within the City. Supporting families to access childcare closer to their homes may reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with commuting to childcare opportunities further from home.

FINANCIAL / OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Capital and operating costs and expenses related to the proposed use are to be funded by the applicant as detailed in the policy.

There is some financial risk to Park Board capital and operating budgets if this policy is approved. Costs associated with processing applications and supporting design and construction review of outdoor childcare space will be borne by the Park Board's capital or operating budgets.

Note that additionally, if work towards provision of outdoor space for childcare per this policy is prioritized, other Park Board priorities may take longer to deliver as a result.

NEXT STEPS

Pending a Board decision, staff will use the proposed CCCUPS Policy to process any incoming applications. If the proposed policy is approved this is anticipated to begin immediately with a pending request from the Kitsilano Community Centre Association.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommend that the Park Board approve the Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy and direct Park Board staff to begin processing requests for use of public park space by childcare operators under this CCCUPS Policy.

General Manager's Office
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC

Prepared by:
Kasel Yamashita, Planner II, Planning, Policy & Environment

/[kty/ka/jsl]

Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy



**VANCOUVER PARK BOARD
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

SUBJECT: Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy	
CATEGORY: Non-Park Use of Park Space	POLICY NUMBER: <i>to assign</i>

PURPOSE

The Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space (CCCUPS) Policy has been developed to consistently review and address requests by childcare operators operating out of community centres for exclusive use of park space under the jurisdiction of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (“Park Board”) and is applicable to new or expanded group childcare programs proposed in existing community centres.

This policy allows staff to assess proposals against established criteria. Under this policy successful applicants will be granted exclusive use of park space to meet licensing requirements for outdoor space to support group childcare use during, at minimum, operating hours.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all childcare operators in existing community centres located in or adjacent to public park space.

DEFINITIONS

Exclusive use of park space: Exclusive use of park space means a fenced area within a park under the jurisdiction of the Park Board that is only accessible for childcare use during specific hours.

ELIGIBILITY

Applications under this policy are required to demonstrate that they meet eligibility, planning and design criteria, and that applicants agree to a series of operational and administrative requirements. Staff will provide a standard intake form to guide applications.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

To be considered favourably, the application must be:

- Submitted by an existing or proposed operator of a childcare located in a community centre, or its delegate (such as a Community Centre Association (“CCA”)), and
- To support an ongoing proposal for a new or expanded indoor group childcare, noting this policy addresses outdoor space to support an indoor program, and
- Supported in writing by:

Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy

VANCOUVER PARK BOARD

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- The Park Board's Director of Recreation,
- City of Vancouver Arts, Culture and Community Services Managing Director of Social Policy and Projects or their delegate
- Licensing Authority (Vancouver Coastal Health)
- Any CCA that is a joint operating partner of the applicable community centre, if not the applicant

Planning and Design Criteria

Criteria for a successful application will include the following:

1. The application must be:
 - For a nominal amount of park space adjacent to an existing Community Centre, noting strategies for co-locating group childcare centres with new or renewed community centres are addressed through the Community Centre Strategy.
 - To support a new or expanded group childcare program that would not otherwise meet the outdoor space requirements as established by the City of Vancouver, the Government of British Columbia and Vancouver Coastal Health.
 - Aligned with minimum provincially-legislated group childcare outdoor space requirements for the proposed facility size (currently 6 sq.m. / child), to a maximum of a 30-child program or 200 sq.m.
2. The proposal must not result in significant negative impacts or conflicts with existing or planned park or recreation uses, as determined by the General Manager of the Park Board in their discretion, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Park features or regularly programmed areas,
 - b. Areas required for external building circulation,
 - c. Riparian or other environmentally important areas,
 - d. Known archaeological sites, or
 - e. Sites of known or suspected cultural significance.
3. The request must not significantly reduce park access within a neighbourhood of low park provision or access as determined by the General Manager of the Park Board in their discretion. Requests will be closely examined for balance between access to park space and childcare use in areas with low provision or access to park space based off up to date Neighbourhood Park Provision map or similar.

Criteria for Operation

Criteria for a successful application will include the following operational and administrative requirements:

Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy

VANCOUVER PARK BOARD

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- The requested outdoor space must be open to the public outside of childcare hours while the park is open, with public access hours clearly posted at the site. At minimum this would be days when the childcare is not in operation, but may also include evenings. This criteria will be determined, waived or amended on a case by case basis at the discretion of the General Manager of the Park Board.
- All costs and expenses related to the proposed use are to be funded by the applicant and the request will not result in any additional costs to the Park Board, including:
 - Costs associated with the outdoor space design and construction,
 - Costs associated with day-to-day operations, maintenance and repairs, renewals or upgrades of the outdoor space, and
 - Costs to restore or repair the area to the satisfaction of the Park Board once the proposed use by the childcare operator has ceased.

Agreements

Prior to any work being commenced on the outdoor space proposed for childcare use, the applicant must sign all legal agreements required to confirm terms of use of space, including requirements as noted above, and termination clauses. The type of documentation and approvals process will be based on City and Park Board practices at the time the application is processed under this policy.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The applicant must submit a completed intake form, appending all required information. Submission requirements will include:

- Confirmation of applicant eligibility as established by the criteria set out in this policy
- Confirmation that proposal meets planning and design criteria as detailed in this policy
- Confirmation that applicant agrees to operational and administrative requirements as detailed in this policy
- Supporting materials and calculations, as requested by staff, including:
 - Contact information for the applicant
 - Written support to proceed with application by signatories noted on page 1 of this policy.
 - Area calculations, including:
 - Group childcare outdoor area licensing requirement
 - Area of park request
 - Assessment of existing uses in and around the area of proposal
 - Aerial photograph and sketch plan clearly showing area of proposal

Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy

VANCOUVER PARK BOARD

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Aerial photograph clearly demarcating location of underground utilities
- Site photos
- Other relevant supporting materials

Public Engagement

When a proposal is conditionally approved, Park Board staff will lead a community notification process as part of application review. This process will include posting of signage at the site for a period of two weeks. This process will be coordinated by Park Board staff and any community input received will be considered in the final review of the application.

Approval

Park Board staff will submit each compliant application to the General Manager of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (“General Manager”) for their decision. Authority to approve or deny the application will rest with the General Manager; however, any lease or licence required to be granted as part of the application may be subject to the further approval of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, in their sole discretion.

Next Steps

Approval of a proposal under this policy will allow the applicant to proceed with:

1. The design of the outdoor space to, at a minimum, the Park Board’s Park Development standards. The design of the outdoor space will be subject to the approval of the General Manager of the Park Board, in their discretion.

Note that other requirements may be required by others, (including meeting the intent of the City’s Childcare Design Guidelines and Community Care and Facilities Licensing regulations). This will not be regulated by the Park Board.

2. Entering into any legal agreements required to detail the terms of use including a termination of use clause. The type of documentation and approvals process will be based off City and Park Board practices at the time the application is processed under this policy is processed. Any lease or licence required may be subject to the further approval of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation pursuant to sections 488 and 490 of the Vancouver Charter.

REFERENCE

Outline or link to relevant background or reference information.

RELATED POLICIES

Community Centre Childcare Use of Park Space Policy

VANCOUVER PARK BOARD

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

VanPlay - On October 19, 2020, the Park Board approved the [VanPlay Framework](#) for Vancouver’s [Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan](#). VanPlay sets priorities and provides tools and policies to support the pursuit of equity, connectivity and access to parks and recreation for all.

Vancouver Citywide Community Centre Strategy - On April 25, 2022, the Park Board approved Vancouver’s [Community Centre Strategy](#) (“CCS”). The CCS outlines a process for planning and delivery of major community centre projects, and provides recommendations and guidance across key areas of community centre service delivery and planning.

City of Vancouver Childcare Strategy - In June 2022, City of Vancouver Council approved “[Making Strides: Vancouver’s Childcare Strategy](#)” (the “Childcare Strategy”). This City of Vancouver Strategy references and aligns itself with the Park Board’s Community Centre Strategy’s approach to childcare, and notes that a significant number of childcare spaces are located in or adjacent to community centres operated by Vancouver’s Board of Parks and Recreation. The Childcare Strategy directs City staff to work with Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to support policy development guiding shared outdoor space access for childcare operations in parks.

APPROVAL HISTORY

ISSUED BY: Park Planning Policy & Environment	APPROVED BY:	DATE:
AMENDED BY:	APPROVED BY:	DATE: