

February 13, 1997

SUBJECT: STANLEY PARK VEHICLE CLOSURES

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. **THAT the Board postpone the creation of 1997 car free days in Stanley Park and instruct staff to prepare options for 1998 car free days/zones for Board consideration by November 1997, and**
- B. **THAT the Board give approval to the organization, Better Environmental Sound Transportation, for an east side closure from 8:00-10:00 AM, and a mini Brockton closure to noon, Sunday, June 1, 1997, with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.**

POLICY

To accommodate major special events, the Board has a policy to allow for a once per month Stanley Park closure to vehicular traffic until 10 AM, with no closures during July and August.

BACKGROUND

In the context of trying to reduce vehicular traffic in Stanley Park, the Board on October 28, 1996, moved "THAT staff and stakeholders work jointly on the creation of car free days in 1997, one of which to coincide with Environments Week in June 1997." Sunday, June 1, 1997, was identified in the discussion as a good day because it marks the beginning of Bike to Work Week, an event sponsored by the organization, Better Environmental Sound Transportation,(BEST).

The purpose of this proposed vehicle closure would be to:

1. give people the opportunity to experience a portion of Park Drive free of regular car traffic.
2. identify and evaluate the impact of an extended closure and identify the costs of implementing regular and ongoing closures
3. determine the interest of cyclists and roller bladers to leave the Seawall and come on to the road.

DISCUSSION

Staff and the Recreation Services Committee, with the participation of Aquarium staff, have had several meetings to examine different ways of proceeding with a full or partial Stanley Park closure to cars for a significant part of a day. Aquarium staff have had preliminary conversations with some of the other potentially impacted stakeholders, including HMS Discovery.

The committee examined and evaluated all potential Park closures. (Appendix A - Analysis and Impact) They are listed in order of their ease of implementation:

- a. mini Brockton closure
- b. full Brockton closure
- c. Westside closure
- d. East side closure
- e. full closure of Park Drive, but with access into 2nd Beach, Lagoon Drive, and Upper and Lower Zoo Parking
- f. full closure, that is, no access into any part of the Park

Potential dates and zones of the Park were examined and analyzed in terms of desirability, feasibility and impact. The Mini Brockton zone was selected as one of the easier areas in which to implement a closure if a decision was made to proceed in 1997. A concept of first Sundays (in the month) was identified as a good marketing strategy and dates were identified in May, June and July for three closures. (Appendix C).

However, there were still a number of other factors requiring consideration, not the least of which was funding. A budget must provide for:

- a contract to hire an event organizer to plan and organize the closures and all attendant activity
- promotion of closures to inform people about the restricted parking and vehicle access and the potential impact on Causeway traffic
- promotion to attract people into the Park for the experience
- reserve police officers to control traffic
- advance signage on routes into the Park
- loss of Park Board revenue
- the cost of staging an event or entertainment if this were to be a part of the closure

The Committee reviewed the cost of organizing, promoting and implementing three closures, the loss of Park Board revenue, and the potential source of funding. The cost to the Board will be well over \$20,000 (Appendix B) and the only source of funds is the Sponsorship Fund unless funds are transferred from the operating budget or taken from the NNR budget. Either alternative would, effectively, be a budget cut.

Other factors related to an extended closure include:

- traffic congestion outside the Park (Georgia, Beach, Denman Streets and the Causeway) and within the Park;
- reduced parking which limits access for park visitors and, in particular, for people travelling from greater distances with families and equipment;

- inconvenience to resident leaseholders;
- loss of revenue for other businesses in the Park.

Time is another significant issue. It is necessary to first have Board approval for funding, dates and the specific areas of closure in order to proceed with the organization of a series of closures. A four month lead time is the optimum requirement to effectively plan and organize this project. It is now very late in the year to begin a task of this magnitude given the number of other concurrent demands placed on staff. Even though this task can only be achieved by contracting with an organizer, which in itself takes time, it will still require a significant amount of staff time to supervise, consult and problem solve. As well, there are some aspects of the consultation, negotiating and fundraising that only regular and senior staff can do.

The project will also require the design and implementation of a process to measure and evaluate the success of the closures. It should also be determined whether the closures could continue on some regular basis without an ongoing operating cost. If this is not possible, and it is somewhat unlikely, then the Board would need to establish some commitment to ongoing funding. These are all questions which appear to require more consideration before proceeding with a series of closures.

The other factor related to a closure this year is the amount of construction that will be effecting the use of the Park in the late Spring and potentially into summer. (The preparation of a Bike lane on Park Drive, Lower Zoo renovation and landscaping, Ceperley Park and 2nd Beach path construction).

Another important initiative related to a potential reduction of traffic in the Park is the Jitney Service. This enterprise also requires staff attention and analysis. After the 1997 experience with this operation, the Board will be in a better position to integrate the jitney service with a closure.

All of these matters were discussed by the Recreation Services Committee at their meeting February 3, 1997. Based on this discussion staff were asked to prepare a report recommending postponement of the consideration to create car free days in Stanley Park in 1997. The Recreation Services Committee will re examine the car free days proposal in September with a view to a report and Board consideration by November 1997. Approval by December 1, 1997, will allow sufficient time to adequately plan for car free days/zones in 1998.

The Committee also recommended that the BEST organization still be able to proceed with their event and that the Board approve a cycling event for Sunday, June 1, 1997, that includes a full east side closure from 8:00-10:00 AM and a mini Brockton closure that extends to noon, with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager. The east side closure is in keeping with the Board's policy on vehicular closures. There are no other closures approved for June. The extended two hour closure of Brockton Point, while outside existing policy, appears possible given the limited duration, time of year and hour of day. The Board will not be involved in the promotion or organization of the event but will, of course, assist the organizers in the usual manner. There will be some additional consultation required with HMS Discovery, the Vancouver Rowing Club and the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, the tour bus companies, the Aquarium and the sports groups in Brockton Oval as this closure is outside normal procedures.

CONCLUSION

The rationale for day long vehicular closures requires more consideration, given the impact and cost of

implementation. The organization of such closures requires an allocation of resources and four months for planning and organization. The BEST organization will still be able to conduct an event in Stanley Park to launch the Bike to Work Week.

Prepared by:
 Recreation Division
 Board of Parks and Recreation
 City of Vancouver

Appendix A

| Type of closure | # Parking stalls available | # Parking stalls not available | Areas of impact |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. Mini Brockton Closure | 2769 parking stalls available on West side and East side up adjacent to the Aquarium and all restaurants | 556 stalls not available from Royal Van to Upper Cricket pitch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no access by tour buses/vehicles to totem pole/Brockton point attractions • stakeholders to access area prior to 8am, no exit until park reopens • less impact on local traffic and most park stakeholders • access maintained to RVYC • less impact overall in terms of the proposed closures |
| 2. Full Brockton closure | 2334 parking stalls available | 991 stalls not available from the Aquarium to lumbermen's arch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no access by tour buses/vehicles to totem pole/Brockton point attractions • no vehicle access to aquarium, Brockton oval, HMCS & parking area • stakeholders to access area prior to 8am, no exit until after park reopens |

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|---|--|---|---|
| 3. West Side Closure | 2541 parking stalls available to park on the East side of the park and Ceperley area | 784 stalls not available for parking on the West side of the park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides access by tour buses into the totem pole attraction but not to the Prospect point area • no access by vehicles to the Prospect Pt. and Ferguson Pt. Teahouse Restaurants, 2nd Beach and 3rd Beach concessions • stakeholders must access prior to 8am and exit after the end of the closure • Park Drive West road is not ideal for cycling/in-line skating due to slope of hill and condition of road |
| 4. East Side Closure | 1323 parking stalls available on the West side, Lost lagoon and Second beach areas | 2002 stalls not available on the East side of the park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no tour bus/car access to totem pole attraction but access maintained to Prospect Pt. and West side attractions • no vehicle access into east side of park except for stakeholders prior to 8am, to exit only after park reopens • access to West side of park from Causeway to Prospect Point • consider two way traffic on Lost Lagoon to lessen impact on Georgia Street • advanced signage and notification in papers required • consider Jitney service from Ceperley lot as shuttle to Children's Zoo lot on east side • *maintain transit access to Children's Zoo lot |
| 5. Full closure of Park drive with access into 2nd beach Lagoon | 892 parking stalls available to park on the East side of the park | 1948 stalls not available for parking in the park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no access by tour buses into attractions at Totem poles and Prospect |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| drive and Upper and Lower zoo parking. | 622 parking stalls available to park on the West side of the park | | <p>point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access by stakeholders prior to 8am, no exit until after the closure • provides for some parking in the core areas of the Children' s zoo, Lost lagoon and Second beach areas therefore less impact on local traffic • maintain transit access to Children' s Zoo loop |
| 6. Full Closure - no access to any part of the park by vehicles | none | 3325 stalls not available for parking in the entire park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lost of 3325 parking stalls • no access by tour buses to attractions at totem poles & Prospect Point • no access by public cars to restaurants, aquarium, rowing club, Royal Van Yacht Club, HMCS, or serve yard except for stakeholders prior to 8 am. • will have greatest impact on local traffic at Georgia St and Beach Avenue • advanced signage and notification of closure in papers will be required • maintain transit access to Children' s Zoo loop |

Appendix B

BUDGET

Contract for organizer

(Will depend on the number of closure days)

| | |
|--|-------|
| Planning, consultation and organization time | 6,720 |
|--|-------|

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|--|----------|
| \$30 hour/14 hours/week/16 weeks | |
| Follow up days depending on fall out from events \$30 hr/7hr/3 days | 630 |
| Closure days \$30/hr/7 hours/3 days | 630 |
| Additional staff on closure days 2 staff @ 150/day/3 days | 900 |
| 4 Reserve Officers \$30 hour/6hours/3daysx4 | 2,160 |
| Costs for signage | 1,000 |
| Promotion | 3,000 |
| Miscellaneous | 1,000 |
| Total Cost Estimate | \$16,040 |

Park Board Revenue Loss

| <u>Parking Stalls</u> | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Spaces Lost | Value Per/Day |
| Based on \$3 day/#spaces | | |
| Full closure | 3,325 | \$9,975.00 |
| Full park closure, with parking in upper and lower zoo, Lost Lagoon and 2nd Beach | 1,948 | 5,844.00 |
| Full East side closure | 2,002 | 6,006.00 |
| West side closure | 784 | 2,352.00 |
| Full Brockton closure | 991 | 2,973.00 |
| Partial Brockton closure | 556 | 1,668.00 |
| <u>Concessions</u> | | |
| Brockton - depending on the month/average | | 2,000.00 |
| Lumberman' s Arch | | |
| 3rd Beach | | |
| Lower Zoo | | |

1. Proposed Zone

The Mini Brockton zone, as designated in Appendix A, was defined as being one of the easier areas in which to implement a closure. It is also more easily accessible for those who can walk, skate or bike into the Park. It is a popular area for families, flat and conducive to roller blading and cycling with the potential for drawing cyclists and skaters off the Seawall. In addition, a closure to cars in this area will have a more limited impact on resident stakeholders and revenue loss than other more extensive closures. It will also have the least impact on traffic on Georgia and Denman streets, the Causeway and First Narrows Bridge, and of course, Beach Avenue.

2. Proposed Dates

Potential dates and zones of the Park were examined and analyzed in terms of feasibility and impact. The committee identified the first Sunday (of the month) as being useful for promotional purposes. In addition, the first Sundays under consideration did not appear to conflict with any major 1997 events in the Park. Three Sundays seemed like a good number for the first year in terms of analyzing public response, cost benefit, and impact. Initially May, June and July were selected because three in a row was again useful for marketing purposes. At this time, however, May, while still possible, does not allow much lead time for planning, consultation, and organization. The alternative is June, July and September. Given the high number of visitors to the Park in the summer months and the fact that the long week end in August has the highest record for traffic, this month has been excluded from consideration.