

Date: October 14, 1999

SUBJECT: DRAFT GENDER EQUITY POLICY

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve in principle the Draft Gender Equity Policy Statement and program objectives subject to future consultation and,

THAT The Board direct staff to consult with community centre associations and affiliated sports organizations with regard to the development of the policy and the program plan.

POLICY

The Draft Gender Equity Policy Statement is as follows:

“The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is committed to the achievement of gender equity. We will measure all of our activities against the values of equity and fairness without discrimination on the basis of gender. These activities will include the allocation of all programs and resources available within the community and ensure that our programs, services, parks, fields, and facilities meet the needs of females and males.”

BACKGROUND

A staff Gender Equity Committee was formed in 1996 to review access and gender equity issues within the Recreation Division. The committee terms of reference are attached (Appendix A).

In the last year the committee has been working on developing a gender equity policy and program objectives (Appendix B). A major accomplishment to date of the committee was the six (6) staff training workshops (“More than an Open Door”) in 1997/98 where 120 staff attended.

DISCUSSION

Gender Equity is the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities to both males and females.

- 2 -

It includes the redressing of identified imbalances by taking pro-active measures to “level the playing field” through initiatives focusing on encouraging female activity.

The emphasis for gender equity is not a negative process designed to disenfranchise men but an attempt to attract and include girls, teenage girls and women and bring them to an equitable level of participation in Parks and Recreation.

The Principles of Gender Equity include the following:

1. All participants in parks and recreation services have the right to a recreation environment that is gender-equitable.
2. Gender equity considers social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, race, sexual orientation, sex and age.
3. Gender equity requires sensitivity to gender, determination, commitment, political will, and vigilance over time.
4. The foundation of gender equity is built upon the co-operation and collaboration among participants, user groups, community groups, community associations, politicians, Park Board staff, families and members of communities.

The following issues and action steps have been identified and need to be addressed in order to achieve gender equity. We require good data on gender participation to review and determine the future scope and focus of work. Allocation policies need to be reviewed for fields, gymnasiums and arenas to improve access to facilities. To encourage female participation in physical activities, programming for girls and women only activities need to be encouraged. The Park Board is the facilitator of community recreation opportunities, i.e., sports, fitness. We need to develop awareness and education materials to assist our partners with this direction.

To ensure that our policy and direction reflects the needs of our community partners this report is an initial step. We now need to further consult with local Community Centre Associations, affiliated groups and sport groups in order to provide an opportunity for input into the gender equity policy and program. This process may take three to six months to complete and at this time the committee will bring forward a final report to the Board on the gender equity policy and program plan.

CONCLUSION

A Gender Equity policy statement and program is required in order to assess and improve the opportunities, programs, access and support for girls and women in the parks and recreation delivery system. It will also provide a framework for staff on which to base the allocation of services and facilities in order to achieve gender equity.

Prepared by:
Stanley District
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, B.C.
Attachments