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Accomplishment Report 1999

The year 1999 was filled with new beginnings for the Vancouver Park Board. The **New Directions** reorganization finished its first year filled with significant accomplishment while an old century closed and a new millennium commenced.

Internal Initiatives

New Directions

In January the **New Directions** initiative was implemented after receiving unanimous approval from the Board. Its key was to decentralize services, making them closer and more accessible to the public they serve. This was achieved through the development of District Offices within the community. As well, all management positions were reevaluated resulting in job profile descriptions clearly outlining duties and responsibilities. The successful implementation of this initiative demonstrated the staff willingness to change and their commitment to excellence.

Performance Review

The successful introduction of the new Performance Review program enabled all participants to clearly set goals, objectives and their timely assessments throughout the year. Essential elements within the program were the concurrent training of staff emphasizing improved communication and feedback skills, better coaching methods and celebration of successes.

Information Technology

Preparations for the Year 2000 became a high priority for IT in 1999. Staff inventoried and assessed 97 departmental hardware and software systems. Twelve systems were determined to be non-compliant and were upgraded or replaced, including parking meters, marina gate opening systems, and some community centre registration systems. The preparations and upgrades were successful, as the actual rollover to January 1st, 2000 occurred without incident. Significant progress was made in standardizing recreation software, as RecWare was implemented at 10 additional community centres in 1999 (now 18 in total) to handle program registration, and a companion point of sale system, ProApp, was implemented at 7 more centres (now 15 in total) to handle revenue and replace cash registers. On the infrastructure side, a new network server and connection was installed at the renovated Killarney Centre, and preparations began for the computerization of the new Coal Harbour

Community Centre.

Balancing the Budget

SAP, a new system targeting better financial and human resources applications and information, was introduced city wide at the year's start. Though hampered by its unique "style", staff patience and perseverance have resulted in great strides. Long term benefits of the SAP system will better decentralize financial functions giving users immediate budget and personnel information. SAP's rocky start frustrated staff with an initial lack of information but we can report, at the end of 1999, a modest budget surplus. Complete financial performance details are included on Appendix 1.

Improved Labour Relations

In tandem with changes associated with ***New Directions***, the Board realized that impacts on staff would be inevitable and methods of support during this important time were imperative. A number of initiatives were implemented: Performance Review (outlined above), training, staff information sessions, seminars and the close monitoring and timely clearing of grievances. Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) initiatives included a complete reorganization of the OH&S committee, development and close monitoring of an incident data base and the establishment of policies, procedures and training to address information OH&S deficiencies.

Completed Insurance Database and New Reporting Protocol

To ensure residents, staff and properties of the Board are well covered against injury, risk and damages, extensive Risk Management procedures have been put in place. This includes establishment of a comprehensive database of property including 330 diverse facilities valued at \$234,371,000 and insured contents and equipment valued at \$27,346,000. This database requires continual updating as Board facilities grow, age or are closed. A new claim processing reporting protocol with an emphasis on the "preventive" was also initiated.

External Initiatives

Dogs Off Leash Sites

Following a three year public consultation process, the Park Board's unique program allowing off leash times during proscribed hours of the day, were initiated in 25 park locations throughout the city. By encouraging community involvement, clear signage and supporting a Dog Watch Program, the Board was able to satisfy the needs of a wide variety of park users.

Ghost Train in Stanley Park

The launch of the Ghost Train in Stanley Park during October proved that

intuitive ideas from staff can produce new and innovative programs to the delight of residents. Total attendance of this 22 day event was 37,496. It generated \$131,000 gross revenue with a net revenue to the Board of \$40,000.

Communities in Bloom

The nation wide "Communities in Bloom" competition was an opportunity to celebrate Vancouver's legacy of verdant park space, tree-lined boulevards, beautiful floral displays, pristine beaches and abundant recreational facilities. A key component of the contest was community involvement and a contest called "The Most Beautiful Block". This along with all the other important criteria helped Vancouver win the competition, reaffirming our position as the most beautiful and liveable city in the world!

Redevelopment of Killarney Community Centre

The Phase One Redevelopment of Killarney Community Centre was completed in October. This \$5.9 million redevelopment made possible the construction of a 30,000 square foot, two story building containing a 7,000 square foot gymnasium, 15 multi-purpose rooms, 5,000 square foot lobby area and 8 new offices.

Kerrisdale Community Centre Expansion

The expansion completed in August has significantly increased both the quality and quantity of programmable space in the original community centre plus the vacated Health Department Wing. New facilities include a youth activity room, fitness centre, craft studio, martial arts room, several multi-purpose rooms and office space.

Hastings Park Restoration

The long awaited promise for a major park in the city's east sector has incrementally turned into a reality with the official opening of the beautifully landscaped 10 acre Sanctuary in August. This was preceded by a new agreement between the City, Park Board and the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) which must find new premises by 2002. By that time the park's restoration will have advanced to a stage that would no longer support the traditional PNE annual fair. As well, the Park Board approved a joint operating agreement with the Hastings Park Working Committee, long a community partner with the Park Board with respect to Hastings, to guide the park's future management.

Dedication of May and Lorne Brown Park

Former Park Commissioners Lorne and May Brown held a unique position in Park Board history and together gave their service generously to the City of Vancouver. In September, their past dedication and contributions were recognized when the Board officially named the park site at Hornby and Howe

Streets the *May and Lorne Brown Park*.

Partnerships

The St. James Society

A unique partnership with the St. James Society initiated the transformation of a former orphanage known as Babies Cottage on Burrard View Park, to a much needed hospice. The addition of community recreational space on the basement level made this a win-win situation for the Society and the local community.

New Corporate Sponsor- Nestle

In January, the Board entered into a five year corporate sponsorship agreement with Nestle Canada Inc. Over the course of the agreement, Nestle will pay the Board \$150,000 in event sponsorship, \$100,000 in new equipment and \$75,000 in marketing funds for a total value of \$325,000. This brings to four the number of official Park Board corporate sponsors including Coke, Kodak and Blenz Coffee.

Community Centre Associations - Promotional Video

A partnership with the Community Centre Associations saw the Park Board approve a \$7,500 contribution toward the production of a promotional video demonstrating the benefits of community centres and their programs as well as park and recreations facilities. It was extensively utilized by the Associations during the City's Capital Plan campaign which later was approved by voters including an additional \$2 million for upgrading community centres and infrastructure.

Little Mountain Baseball at Hillcrest Park

In November, the Board passed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Little Mountain Baseball Society allowing the reconstruction and operation of a concession/clubhouse structure at Hillcrest Park. The Board's approval of the MOU and specific location for the concession/clubhouse will enable the completion of construction, along with the new play fields there, in time for the Canadian Little League Championship in 2001.

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden - Pagoda Project

The Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Garden was the first outdoor authentic garden of its type to be constructed outside China. Finished in 1986, it will now be joined by a seven story pagoda fashioned after a long-standing original in Chuan Zhou, Fujian Province in China. The pagoda proposal is the result of a very generous donation which will also see the expansion of the garden gift shop, a new education/presentation hall, interior courtyard, volunteer resource/rest area, and visitor washrooms. The Board's approval in principle

to these new initiatives will permit Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society to proceed with public consultation and further design, planning and fundraising activities.

Grimmett Park Gets Greener

A community dream for the return of parkland and the coming together of two diverse recreational groups resulted in a 0.25 acre gain in greenspace at Grimmett Park this year. Asphalt surrounding the Pacific Indoor Lawn Bowling Club building was removed and the resulting space beautifully landscaped with native plants and a pathway. At the same time, the indoor lawn bowling club joined forces with the Phoenix Gymnasium Club in a proposed project to build a jointly operated facility near Nat Bailey Stadium. Once the lawn bowlers vacate their building, Grimmett Park will be totally restored to the community.

Spanish Bank Creek

This stream "day lighting" project, inspired and funded by the Vancouver Salmon and Stream Society, prompted the removal of a culvert on Spanish Bank Beach. This would foster better high tide access to the stream running down from Pacific Spirit Park for coho salmon and other fish species. It demonstrates the benefits of community based efforts in restoring the urban landscape.

Capital Plan

The largest ever Parks & Recreation Capital Plan, totaling \$31.5 million, received a 71% approval rating by Vancouver voters with \$2 million of that sum to be spent exclusively on seismic upgrading

of community centres. A good working relationship with colleagues at City Hall plus the strong support of community associations and an extensive public consultation process for the Capital Plan, proved once again to be a winning combination for all.

FOCUS 2000

Strategic Planning

Long before the reorganization through *New Directions* was launched, staff together with stakeholders, worked to identify the issues, and the challenges they would present for the next century. These issues were summarized in five feature points:

- * building a service focused organization.
- * developing partner stakeholder relationships.

- * upgrading parks and recreation facilities.
- * financing the future.
- * changing the way we work.

The year 2000 will see the completion of the Strategic Plan which will effectively outline the actions and responsibilities dealing with the above issues. Extensive efforts will be placed to develop information based systems to evaluate benchmark and ensure equitable allocation of resources. At the same time, we will strive to sustain and increase our revenue sources to meet our current and expanding services. And we will continue to work closely with our diverse stakeholders to manage the challenge of aging infrastructure and dramatic population growth.

Fulfilling the Park Board Mandate

Vancouver's growing population reminds us of our mandate to provide accessible and quality services. We will work diligently to improve and expand our recreational resources across the city.

In 2000, we will open the new Coal Harbour Community Centre in downtown. At the same time, we will complete a significant portion of the Seawall pedestrian/bicycle/rollerblade path which will then offer one of the most spectacular scenic routes in the world, stretching from Coal Harbour all the way to Spanish Bank. New park openings will include Marina Square near Coal Harbour, the Granville Loops Park on the south side of the bridge fall and a wonderful seven acre phase of Hastings Park with a classic Italian theme to be known as *il giardino italiano*. The restoration of the playing fields at Hillcrest Park will be reopened and five other city wide play fields will also be refurbished.

Growth & Partnerships

As our population grows we are faced with the challenges of meeting increased demands on services with the reality of static funding. In order to meet these new customer demands, we will work diligently to forge and engage new relationships and partnerships within the community which this year will include the Vancouver School Board, the Italian community (*il giardino italiano*), a Park Watch Program and the Millennium Sports Facility partners. In addition we will continue to seek public consultation on a wide variety of issues to better meet community requirements.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by thanking those who have made this year and the year to come possible.

- The only elected Park Board in Canada represents the hopes and desires

of all its many communities. The Park Board Commissioners are to be congratulated for their guidance through policy development and the thousands of hours volunteered within their city.

- What gives our institution strength are the people who support it. Our staff are as diverse as the services, they provide from plumbing and landscaping to recreational programmers and managers. Their skill, focus, commitment and high standards have formed the foundation of the Park Board for 110 years.
- Our partners and stakeholders through community centre associations, VanDusen Gardens, restauranteurs, corporate sponsors, volunteers and many more have become the pillars of the organization. Their guidance and cooperation have assisted us in delivering a well balanced park and recreation service.
- The public who engages us in debate and dialogue and through the support of our many programs, continue to give us new viewpoints and opportunities to better understand their needs.

Thank you all for another good year.

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