

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Date: May 3, 2001
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257-8463
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TO: Vancouver City Council
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

FROM: General Manager, Board of Parks and Recreation and
General Manager of Engineering

SUBJECT: Stanley Park Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATION

THAT principles of the Letter of Understanding between Engineering Services and the Park Board (See Appendix I) governing the management of the Stanley Park water system be approved.

POLICY

There is no applicable policy.

BACKGROUND

The Stanley Park water system was developed in the early 20th century and has been maintained over the years largely by Park Board staff with minimal budgets.

The age of the infrastructure, the flow regime and the limited Park Board funds available for the operation and maintenance of the water supply system created a vulnerable situation, which contributed to last years water emergency.

The situation illustrated the need for a better resourced management to be applied to drinking water in Stanley Park.

On August 1, 2000, fecal coliform contamination of the water supply at the Second Beach testing station was reported to the Park Board staff. A response team was quickly assembled and after a period of testing and flushing the water was once again declared safe for human consumption.

The response team activity was documented and sent to the Commissioners and Council in a joint report from the General Managers of Engineering and Board of Parks and Recreation.

The water crisis also highlighted that from the perspective of the Vancouver Richmond Health Board, the City is ultimately responsible for the health and safety of drinking water supplies in the City, including Stanley Park.

An information report to the Board dated August 29, 2000 contained a number of recommendations which were to be reported on within one year.

DISCUSSION

Status of Follow up Response to Water Quality Issues

This part of the report updates the status of recommendations (flushing, sampling, construction practises etc.) contained in the August 29, 2000 report. The recommendations are summarized on the attached chart (See Appendix II).

Progress has been made on most of the recommendations although some momentum was lost during the civic workers strike in the fall. While much work remains to be done, staff are confident that current construction and repair practices as well as water management and testing procedures ensure the quality of water in the park.

Engineering Services' Role

Last year's water issue confirmed that the Stanley Park water and sanitary sewer systems are reaching the end of their service lives. Much of the primary system requires replacement. To date Park Board maintenance funding has not been sufficient to maintain the system to a standard that is achieved elsewhere in the City. In the past Engineering Services has assisted the Board with infrastructure issues in the park. Last year's joint response represents the most intense cooperation to date.

In the short term there is a requirement for a more aggressive program of leak detection, sampling, valve and hydrant maintenance. It has been proposed that Engineering Services assume responsibility for this program. Engineering has the technical and supervisory

resources to undertake the initial program as well as develop and implement a long term infrastructure renewal program for the water system in Stanley Park.

Discussions are ongoing about broadening Engineering's involvement in the sanitary sewage system as well. Some technical issues require resolution prior to seeking Board and Council approval.

Parks and Engineering staff have negotiated a Letter of Understanding (LOU) governing the roles of the respective parties in the proposed arrangement. Under this LOU, the City Engineering Services would assume full responsibility for the replacement, maintenance and operation of the primary water system, with the Park Board continuing to be responsible for the replacement, maintenance and operation of the services connected to the primary water system. These are referred to in the LOU as the secondary water system.

This division of responsibility parallels the division between Engineering Services and private property owners elsewhere in the city. The LOU provides for a comprehensive assessment of the location and condition of the various systems and a precise determination of the responsibility between the two parties.

The LOU provides for the Board and Council to approve a long term replacement program.

The LOU assures the primacy of Parks and Recreation objectives in the execution of the replacement program, i.e. no trees, landscapes, shrubs or buildings shall be removed to facilitate water and sewer construction without the Board's prior approval. Similarly the Board undertakes not to connect secondary lines to the primary system without Engineering's approval.

The replacement plan will be based on the Board's known and anticipated requirements for water services. Any subsequent increases in the demand for service will require the Board to assume the additional capital cost of primary water system upgrading, not unlike a private developer following a re-zoning.

The current practice is that the Board is not subject to water fees, charges and assessments except for commercial ventures (restaurants etc.) within the park. In order to encourage water conservation, meters may be installed in various parts of the park. Any future charges for water would be subject to review by City Council for any adjustments to the Board's global budget.

Funding

Engineering Services estimates that ongoing funding of \$40,000 will be required to undertake a reasonable maintenance program. For 2001, water rates have already been established, consequently it may be necessary to phase in a maintenance program over two years with only the most critical components being undertaken this year. Engineering expects that the initial 2001 program can be accommodated through efficiencies.

SUMMARY

Staff believe that the proposed arrangement will ensure good drinking water in Stanley Park by providing the best engineering services the City has to offer and ensure maintenance and operations at a level consistent with other areas of the City. The Park interests continue to be protected in this arrangement.

In anticipation of this arrangement an application has been made to the Federal/Provincial/Municipal infrastructure program for a \$7.5 million water system replacement program.

Comments from the Medical Health Officer.

"The Medical Health Officer concurs with and supports the recommendation of the General Manager - Parks and Recreation, noting that the drinking water safety concerns raised last fall are adequately addressed by the Letter of Understanding with the Engineering Department. The strategy proposed in the report addresses what was a potential weakness in the City' s water supply system and is in keeping with the broader drinking water protection strategy being formulated between the GVWD, member municipalities and regional health officials. Environmental Health staff will continue to work closely with Park Board and Engineering staff to ensure that the plan is fully implemented."

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General Mgr./Dept. Head:

Report dated: April 17, 2001

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This report has been prepared in consultation with the departments listed to the right, and they concur with its contents

Concurring Departments

City Engineering - Peter Judd

Finance - Ken Bayne
