



Date: July 19, 2001

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR CITY-WIDE AND DISTRICT RECREATION SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive this report for information.

BACKGROUND

The New Directions reorganization of the Park Board in 1999 initially did not address the City-wide Recreation Services (CRS) in the Stanley District. Discussion and consultation on how these services could be provided or supported in the Board's decentralized District model has now occurred. The existing City-wide Services include:

- **Filming and Special Events**
Liaison, permitting and support/monitoring for groups using parks for filming or major special events.
- **Arts and Multiculturalism**
Links with city-wide arts groups, programming support for community arts and multiculturalism.
- **Sport and Field Coordination**
Liaison with Field Users, permitting/monitoring of all fields across the City.
- **Special Needs, Seniors and Leisure Access Card**
Coordination, liaison with groups, program development and implementation.
- **Sports and Fitness**
Liaison with groups using our fitness, gym and indoor court facilities.
- **Youth Services** - this area was considered during the implementation of New Directions and remains a City-wide service administered by the Vancouver East District

A structure for the provision of recreation services in the new District model needed to be developed. Some services were only available at the Administration Building in Stanley Park. Many of the services were also separated from the staff who maintained the parks/facilities where the programs were provided. Of concern also was that many of the recreation issues were coming from the Community but were then sent to the central office to be addressed, moving further away from those people requiring the service.

In order to address these concerns, a staff group was formed in the spring of 2000 including the Directors from the Stanley and Queen Elizabeth Districts, the three Recreation Services Managers, the five Central Recreation Services staff, three Community Recreation Coordinators and a Programmer. This group developed a series of goals that directed the discussion and the design of these services. Specifically these goals were to:

- develop the best ways to provide these services
- ensure that the role of these services in the Park Board mandate was not diminished
- ensure that the services provided are equal to or better than the service levels presently being provided
- ensure that the users of these services receive the most effective response to their needs in a District model if possible
- include those who provide and use these services in the development and consultation about the proposal
- develop a proposal and an implementation plan identifying the resources required

The Proposal Development Group worked through a detailed process including researching other cities and how they provide similar services, clearly describing the services we are presently providing and the groups, individuals, Associations and agencies that use these services. Developing alternative models for service delivery and evaluating these models based on their benefits, challenges, impacts and issues, and finally developing a proposal that would be considered in a consultation process.

Consultation Process:

As a staff group we were concerned that the ideas generated needed to be discussed with the City-wide groups and other individuals and agencies that link into the Park Board system for support. Our consultation process included presentations at workshops and meetings held specifically to discuss these ideas, feedback from others who sent faxes or email in response and conversations with individuals who wished to present their opinions. Several specific areas were targeted:

Presentation to the Community Association Presidents Meeting-

A presentation of the proposal was given in September 2000 and a copy of this report will be provided to the Association Presidents for their information.

Staff Workshops -

Three workshops were held in September 2000 (one in each District) with a presentation of the background, the methodology used to develop the proposal. Time for discussion of the ideas was included. Input from these sessions resulted in changes to the Proposal.

Review with Agencies and Groups -

The organization of City-wide recreation services particularly those related to Special Needs groups, was an agenda item at an interagency meeting called Linkages in January 2001. This presented an opportunity to discuss our ideas with the key agencies involved in the services for those who may find it difficult to access our system because of economic, social, linguistic or physical difficulties.

CUPE 15-

Staff gave an overview presentation of the proposal to the CUPE 15 Labour/Management meeting on June 28, 2001 and an advanced copy of this report will be provided.

Others -

Where roles/activities were remaining City-wide, the groups were notified that the services were proposed to continue in a similar way. Where a new location was being considered, groups were also notified of the proposed change.

DISCUSSION

The Final Plan

The plan for recreation service delivery in a District model was refined through the consultation process discussed above. The revised plan retains City - wide services in the Stanley District for Filming and Special Events, and Sport and Field Coordination. The plan relocates the Arts and Culture portfolio to the Roundhouse Community Centre and moves multicultural activities to both the Queen Elizabeth and Vancouver East Districts linking these and other services supporting access and equity for citizens together at the District level. This will all be accomplished through:

- The redefinition of the existing roles of CRS coordinators of Seniors, Special Needs and LAC and Sport and Fitness to a District Recreation Coordinator role in each of the Queen Elizabeth and Vancouver East Districts. This District Recreation Coordinator role will be primarily a Recreation generalist with a District responsibility for Access and Equity. They will also retain a specialty area.

Recreation functions under the umbrella role of Access and Equity include multiculturalism, LAC, Seniors, Special Needs, Sport/Fitness, Volunteer Development and District specific Initiatives.

The role of the District Recreation Coordinator will continue to include liaison with groups, community and staff, program design and development, research, surveys and inventories, training and development of District staff in their area of specialty, advocacy and promotion of specialty, partnership development, funding sources and grants, and cross-over consultation with City wide functions.

- Relocation of the City-wide Arts portfolio to the Roundhouse, continues to support Community based arts programs, City-wide needs for the Arts and Cultural communities
- Coordinator of Special Events and Filming remains City-wide and located in the Stanley District, serving needs of users at the busiest locations.
- Sport and Field Coordination remains in the Stanley District. Further consideration of this area may occur as a result of the Field Management Study expected to be complete by the end of 2001.

Proposal Feedback

Community Arts - Continuation of support for local community arts programs with the relocation of this service to the Roundhouse.

Support for Community Arts will continue to be an important part of the role for the Coordinator of Arts and Culture at the Roundhouse. Combining resources for the Arts at one facility will ensure an even higher profile for both levels.

Ability to contact/connect into the Park Board easily-

Many of the groups and agencies supporting those with special needs want to be confident that their programs and opportunities within the Park Board system will remain and that they will have, as much as possible, a single contact for these services. Our intention with this proposal is that the District Recreation Coordinator with the Special Needs area of specialty will continue to play a coordinating role, will continue with existing programming and will connect with other staff to expand the awareness of this Community's needs.

Generalist/specialist roles-

Staff expressed concern about the change from one specialty focus to a more generalist role but support the ongoing role of coordination across a District. With the continuation of a single contact for a specialty, many of the concerns have eased.

Questions/difficulties with District organization of playfields and permitting-

Our first proposal included the decentralization of sportsfield, picnic and established special events as well as the booking functions associated with these activities. Staff and user feedback, suggested that this proposal was premature. The proposal has for the interim, kept these as City-wide functions.

Challenges considered

Organizational change requires ongoing communication with community groups and agencies to ensure a smooth transition. Staff will make this a priority in the implementation of the proposal.

While this organizational change requires that the District Recreation Coordinator's role be as a leader and catalyst throughout the Community and the Park Board in their area of specialty, it is acknowledged that they will be required to "learn on the job" and must be supported with training opportunities.

This reorganization of City-wide Recreation Services may require organization policies and procedures to be modified to recognize the District service model.

Each of the District Recreation Coordinators (DRC) will report to their Manager of District Recreation Services. In the Queen Elizabeth District, the new DRC will retain the Special Needs and LAC speciality while the DRC for the Vancouver East District will retain the Sport and Fitness speciality.

Resourcing and Implementation

The two District Recreation Coordinator positions for the Queen Elizabeth and Vancouver East Districts will be created by revising the job descriptions of the existing Central Recreation Services positions of Special Needs and Seniors, and Sports and Fitness to take on the new District responsibilities. No additional funds are required.

Office space and administrative support services will be provided at each of the District offices using existing budgets from City-wide Services areas. Office space will be provided to accommodate the relocation of the Arts and Culture Coordinator to the Roundhouse.

Part-time program resources for Special Needs will be located at the Queen Elizabeth District Office and will be supervised by the District Recreation Coordinator.

Timetable

Effective September 2001, staff are targeted to take up their new roles at the Roundhouse and the Queen Elizabeth District Office. The existing vacant position of Sport and Fitness Coordinator will be posted in August as the new District Recreation Coordinator for the Vancouver East District. The successful applicant will assume their new duties in September or as soon as possible thereafter.

Evaluation

The District Recreation Services Managers and the District Recreation Coordinators will establish criteria early in the transition of these services moving to the District to ensure that we evaluate this change. Our goal was to provide these services at an equal or better level than the City-wide support offered before New Directions.

SUMMARY

A staff group has developed a District service delivery model for several recreation program areas previously provided on a City-wide basis. Two District Recreation Coordinators, with responsibility for citizen access and equity to programs and services in their District, will begin their new roles in the Queen Elizabeth and Vancouver East Districts in September 2001. All other City-wide services will remain in the Stanley District, however Arts and Culture will relocate to the Roundhouse.

Prepared by:

Queen Elizabeth District
Board of Parks & Recreation
Vancouver, BC
lmc