



Date: September 22, 2003

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Vancouver's Waterfront Promenade - Waterfront Center's  
Excellence on the Waterfront Award**

---

## **RECOMMENDATION**

*That the Board receive this report for information.*

## **BACKGROUND**

This report informs the Park Board of an Honour Award bestowed upon the City of Vancouver by the Waterfront Center, Washington, DC, for 'Vancouver's Waterfront Promenade.'

The Waterfront Center in Washington, DC is a non-profit education and urban planning organization that aims to assist communities and the professions in making the wisest and best long-term uses of waterfront resources for maximum public benefit. The Waterfront Center holds an annual juried competition to recognize top-quality urban waterfront projects, comprehensive waterfront plans, and outstanding citizen efforts.

This year, the City of Vancouver received an Honour Award for its Waterfront Promenade at the Waterfront Center's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual International Conference, held in Montreal in September. Judging criteria for this award included: sensitivity of the design to water; quality and harmony of design; civic contribution; and environmental and educational aspects.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on a longstanding commitment by both the Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver City Council to provide public access to the water, Vancouver's waterfront promenade has been in the making for over 80 years when the Park Board started to acquire private properties along the English Bay waterfront. It is the result of a cooperative planning process that has engaged thousands of citizens over the years to help develop a vision for the waterfront, which once consisted largely of former industrial lands. The fundamental goal was to secure public access along the waterfront and expand the seaside promenade started by the Park Board.

Vancouver's waterfront promenade has evolved into a system of either permanent or temporary linkages encircling the perimeter of the Central Area. When completed, the promenade will measure over 25 km in length, of which 21 km are part of the waterfront park system. The promenade connects waterfront neighbourhoods such as North and South False Creek, Coal Harbour, and the West End. Its design and construction has been sensitive to the natural environment; the diversity of shoreline habitats created has helped local flora and fauna re-emerge after years of heavy industry. Public art featured along the promenade reflects local histories and contributes interest to the environment, which is at once natural and urban. Socially, the waterfront promenade has become a place for people from different places, cultures and age groups to meet. Economically, it has fostered tourism, recreation and investment in the local economy.

Design, realization, and ongoing maintenance and operations of the waterfront promenade have involved almost all City and Park Board departments. The promenade has also been consistently supported and facilitated by successive elected City Councils and Park Boards. It represents a profound positive collaboration that has created one of Vancouver's pre-eminent public amenities.

Vancouver's waterfront promenade has been instrumental in helping to connect neighbourhoods and build a strong sense of place. This has taken vision, public commitment, private cooperation, money and a great deal of time to realize. Patience and perseverance, however, has paid extraordinary dividends in terms of building community, tourism, recreation and the image of the City.

Prepared by:  
Stanley District  
Board of Parks and Recreation  
Vancouver, BC  
JDL

