



Date: September 8, 2004

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: VanDusen Botanical Garden Association Memorandum of Understanding

RECOMMENDATION

- A. In support of the Capital Campaign to raise funds for improvements to the VanDusen Botanical Garden (VBG)(the Project) the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (VPB) approve in principle the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association (VBGA).*
- B. That staff report back on a detailed implementation plan for Board approval.*

POLICY

On September 11, 2000 the Park Board approved a vision and strategic direction document entitled "A Clear Vision for a Bright Future" The VanDusen Botanical Gardens, 2000-2005. On March 25, 2002, the Board approved the VanDusen Botanical Garden Concept Plan for the purpose of guiding future development projects at the Garden.

BACKGROUND

VBG is owned and operated by the City of Vancouver and is operated through VPB in collaboration with VBGA, a non-profit association of approximately 9,000 members. VPB and VBGA have approved in principle a plan for capital improvements at VBG.

VBG opened 29 years ago, in 1975. Funds to develop the Garden were acquired through a public/private partnership, including senior levels of government, the City of Vancouver and private funds, primarily from W.J. VanDusen.

This project, projected to cost \$16 million, is a major reinvestment in the VBG, and is the first since its inception. Upon completion, the project will demonstrate sustainability through its construction to the highest possible LEEDS standard, garden and interpretive displays and

through expanded programming. The Project is expected to improve visibility and access through a dramatic entry garden on Oak Street. It will improve visitor services with its new arrival pavilion and updated visitor centre, as well as improvements to its restaurant and a new café in the garden. Revenue generation will be greatly enhanced and enabled through the gift shop which will double in size, and through enlarged and improved rental facilities in the administration centre, as well as a 7,000 sqft multi-use pavilion in the garden for special events, shows, performances and rental opportunities. Net revenues are projected to increase threefold five years after completion. Furthermore, the new facilities will provide capacity for greatly improved education programming, through classrooms in the garden pavilion, as well as interpretive informal education in the arrival hall and the great hall in the visitor centre, and in the living museum gardens.

In support of the Project, the VPB approved the sum of \$250,000 in their 2003-2005 Capital Plan. These funds, together with \$750,000 from the VBGA, for a total of \$1 million, have been committed to a Federal/ Provincial/Municipal Infrastructure Programme application that was approved by the City of Vancouver. The result of this application is pending.

A progress report on the Project was received for information by the VPB Planning and Environment Committee at their March 2004 meeting.

The VBGA, in turn, commenced its Capital Campaign in October 2003, engaging fund raising counsel, Jane Hennessy and Associates. The VBGA reports excellent progress and the Campaign is picking up momentum. To date, over \$2 million has been raised toward an \$8 million goal, and many good prospects are pending. The public portion of the campaign will commence once 50% of the goal is reached and this is projected for March 2005.

It is anticipated that a request for funds for the Project will be part of the process for the VPB 2006-2008 Capital Plan, and that funding allocations will be contingent on priorities yet to be approved by the VPB.

DISCUSSION

The VBGA's fund raising counsel has advised that clarity about VPB support for the Project is required for approaching potential large donors, including individuals, corporations and foundations. To this end, VBGA approached the VPB for a statement of support that would assist it in their approaches. VPB Staff have prepared the attached MOU (appendix 1) in collaboration with the VBGA and this was approved by the VBGA at their meeting August 25, 2004.

The MOU is intended as a support for fund raising but it goes beyond that. It reconfirms the partnership arrangement between the VBGA and the VPB. While it does not specify any financial commitment from the VPB in future Capital Plans, it does indicate that the VPB will

support the Project's inclusion in its Capital Plan process. The VBGA understands that the Project will be considered in the context of VPB priorities. It also confirms that the VPB will support the VBGA in their fund raising efforts. Further, it confirms the intent of both organizations to phase the project according to mutually agreed priorities, as funding becomes available. In addition it states that VPB will undertake an approval process once funds are in hand and that the VPB will assume responsibility for project management.

SUMMARY

The attached MOU, approved by the VBGA and VPB will clarify VPB support for the Project to enable the VBGA to approach potential donors for gifts to its Capital Campaign.

Prepared by:
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JC