



Date: September 21, 2004

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation

FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation

**SUBJECT: Downtown Eastside Arts Programming and Events
in Parks and Open Spaces**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approve the expenditure of \$25,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund for the development of a plan for arts programming and events in Downtown Eastside parks and open spaces subject to matching funds from the Vancouver Agreement and to support being received from neighbourhood organizations.

POLICY

On March 2 1998, the Board approved the use of Corporate Sponsorship Funds by applying the following criteria:

- A. To fund one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will support revenue-generating activities and the money repaid into the Corporate Sponsorship account from the increased revenues within a period of three years;
- B. To fund initiatives with one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will result in improved efficiencies;
- C. To fund one time expenditures over and above the existing funding level in the operating budget which are beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system.

The Park Board Arts Policy states that:

- 1. The Board contributes to the health of communities through community cultural development processes linking artists and community members addressing issues of shared interest;
- 2. The Board provides a vibrant public realm and supports the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

BACKGROUND

Early in 2003, the Chair of the Friends of Victory Square, the Co-founder and Executive Director of Vancouver Moving Theatre Society and the Founder and Co-artistic Director of Mortal Coil Performance Society (the proponents), framed a proposal to the City of

Vancouver and to the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to develop a Program and Event Plan for Victory Square Park. The initiative originated from recognition that, with the completion of improvements to Victory Square Park, a sustainable program and event plan was needed for the space.

Discussions with City staff and neighbourhood agencies indicated that the methodology proposed for Victory Square could be applied to other DTES parks and open spaces in a co-ordinated planning approach. The proponents were asked to develop a proposal to this effect which was submitted to the Vancouver Agreement partners. At that point, a partnership with the Park Board was proposed.

There has been a longstanding acknowledgement that the arts are among the strongest social development tools in the DTES, building bridges among cultures and communities, building on community assets, and creating rich and meaningful community connections. Public spaces are often pointed to as the thermometer reflecting the health and public safety in a community, and arts activity animates, builds capacity, creates productive dialogue on the issues facing communities and contributes to a healthy local economy.

Vancouver Agreement partners are currently developing an arts strategy or framework to compliment the DTES Economic Revitalization Strategy. This economic strategy aims in part to build on the rich culture and heritage of Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods and to contribute to a growing sense of community identity and pride. In line with this, Carnegie Centre, in cooperation with many community partners, has started an initiative to develop a community arts organization and endowment for the delivery of a sustainable arts, cultural, and neighbourhood activity program for the DTES community. The proposal discussed in this report is designed to mesh with each of these initiatives.

DISCUSSION

The proposal calls for workshop visioning for each park and open space to articulate a conceptual basis for activities and to produce a conceptual plan, a detailed program and event plan for each park and open space. This plan will identify production costs, any related park infrastructure requirements, an assessment of local arts organizations interest, a funding feasibility study considering both public and private sector opportunities and a report back to community and funding partners. Parks proposed for inclusion in the process are Victory Square, Pigeon Park, Andy Livingstone, Strathcona, Oppenheimer and Portside.

The proposal has been considered by the Vancouver Agreement partners and they have agreed to match the Park Board contribution of \$25,000 contingent on: the proponent providing 10% of the project costs from the private sector; and the receipt of letters of support from DTES agencies and community organizations. The proponent will provide the funds and letters or indications of support that are being sought.

This process will provide a basis for a coordinated approach to arts activities in Vancouver parks and public spaces. In addition, the community partners will approach the Vancouver Agreement to fund community capacity building through public space arts

initiatives which will achieve some of the visions and recommendations the plan will bring forward.

SUMMARY

The DTES is home to many arts organizations, events and activities which greatly enhance the livability of the neighbourhood. An arts strategy supports the DTES Economic Revitalization goals and contributes to community capacity.

Prepared by:

Susan Gordon
Coordinator, Arts and Culture
Stanley District
Board of Parks & Recreation
Vancouver, B.C.