



Date: May 16, 2005

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**

**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**

**SUBJECT: Special Event – Sea Vancouver**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. That the Board approve the use of Kitsilano/Hadden/Vanier, Creekside and Jericho Parks for the Sea Vancouver Festival from July 6<sup>th</sup> to July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005 with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.*
- B. That for this event only, the General Manager be given the authority to approve any further decisions on behalf of the Board.*

## **POLICY**

The Special Event policies as outlined in Appendix A were approved in December, 2003.

## **BACKGROUND**

Sea Vancouver is a new maritime-themed 5-day festival scheduled for July 6-10, 2005. Programming of the Festival is being developed through an advisory committee with strong support from cultural partners. The main feature of the festival is the participation of historical tall ships.

Organizers are proposing to develop multiple “Festival Zones” using various sites along the waterfront including Kitsilano, Hadden, Vanier, Creekside and Jericho Parks. Other sites include Granville Island, Concord Pacific and Plaza of Nations sites. Festival zones will highlight the historical ships, water based sports, signature Regatta events, innovative arts performances, visual displays and outdoor Maritime marketplaces. The festival areas will operate daily from 11:00 am to 8:00 p.m.

In October 2004, the Office of Cultural Affairs proposed and City Council approved the concept of Sea Vancouver as a signature civic event. A detailed proposal was presented to the City’s FEST committee in March of 2005. The FEST Committee is currently working with the event organizer with regard to traffic management as well as emergency and security plans for the event.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to the Board's Special Event Policy, the approval of new special events is based on:

1. evaluating the compatibility of the event with the Park Board's mandate;
2. determining the suitability of the site to accommodate the event;
3. consulting with various park stakeholders and Park Board staff.

### Compatibility with Park Board's Mandate

For the purposes of special event approval, compatible events can be defined as those which focus on recreational activities which are physical, social, cultural, artistic and/or environmental in nature. Sea Vancouver is compatible with Park Board's mandate on recreational, cultural/historical perspectives.

### Site Suitability

It is an objective of the Park Board to match special events with an appropriate park site. This is accomplished by evaluating the event and the site using the following criteria:

- compatibility of the event with existing use/users of the park;
- intensity and frequency of other park use/users;
- park condition – protection and preservation;
- availability of amenities on site (washrooms, hard surfaces, etc.).

Since Sea Vancouver is a multi-site venue, the site suitability evaluation process will be in two parts – an evaluation of the overall event requirements as well as park specific analyses.

Sea Vancouver specifically requires a number of large waterfront spaces with water access. To off-set the high operational costs, the event also requires gated areas with an admission fee. This significantly limits the number of parks which can accommodate this activity. Thus, if this event is to be accommodated, the Board may have to deviate from the outlined site suitability criteria.

As previously mentioned, the Sea Vancouver is requesting the use of Kitsilano/Hadden/Vanier, Creekside and Jericho Parks. All of these sites are city wide, waterfront parks with "support" amenities and they all accommodate a variety of other special events. The park suitability analysis will focus on the event's programming and site requirements for each site, the identification of issues or concerns followed by staff's recommendation(s).

### *Kitsilano/Hadden/Vanier Parks*

Programming for this large gated site (see Appendix B) includes tall ship viewing and access, an entertainment stage, an 800 seat special occasion licensed area and activity areas consisting of First Nations canoe carving, figure head carving and ship skill

challenges. Although the site will close at 8:00 p.m., a musical theatre performance is scheduled for each night until 10:30 p.m. The organizer is asking for permission to serve alcohol during the intermission of the theatre performance. It is anticipated that the area will have a daily capacity of 18,000 visitors with a peak capacity of 12,000 visitors.

The proposed use of this site raises event scheduling and access issues. Given the intensity of existing programming (Children's Festival, Bard on the Beach, volleyball tournaments, etc.), staff have not historically recommended any more large scale events in Kits Point area. In addition, gating of the site will prevent public access to the dog off leash beach area. However, for this event, staff are prepared to recommend Kitsilano/Hadden/Vanier Parks as an appropriate site based on this event's waterfront orientation and access requirements and its "partnership" relationship with the Maritime Museum.

#### *Creekside Park*

Creekside Park will primarily be used as a viewing area for False Creek water activities. In addition, the gated area will accommodate event sponsors' and VIP tents (see Appendix C). It is anticipated that the area will have a daily capacity of 10,000 visitors with a peak capacity of 8,000 visitors.

Issues with regard to Sea Vancouver's use of Creekside also relate to access and scheduling. Gating of the northern section of the park will result in the loss of public access to the children's playground. Another gated event, the Dragon Boat Festival also results in the loss of access to the playground. In light of the event's water orientation and access requirements, staff are recommending approving the event's use of this site.

#### *Jericho Park*

The event's use of Jericho Park will not have a significant impact on the public use of the park as the gated area is relatively small as it primarily serves as a ticketing and staging area for tall ship access (see Appendix D).

#### Consultation

The event organizers met with representatives from the Kits Point and Citygate communities. In addition, the organizer is in the process of holding a series of community information meetings. To date, issues raised at these meetings include:

#### *Traffic Management*

Local resident concerns focused on residential access and parking restrictions. The event organizer is planning on using a series of parking lots in the False Creek basin, dedicated shuttle buses between sites and parking facilities, and contracted water shuttles to supplement existing shuttles, as well as to provide direct service to tall ships visitors and festival zones. It is important to note that the City's Engineering Department and not the Park Board is responsible for the traffic management plan including residential access and parking restrictions.

### *Event Related Noise*

As mentioned, the entertainment areas will operate for five days. Amplified sound will occur from small entertainment stages in Hadden and Creekside Parks. In addition, the set-up/take-down and servicing of the sites will generate noise. The event will be required to follow the City's noise bylaw.

### *Security*

Resident and stakeholder concerns centered on special occasion licensed areas, emergency services and security plans. The event organizer is required by the FEST Committee to produce emergency services and security plans. With regard to the special occasion licensed areas, the organizer has successfully operated a similar sized licensed area at another special event. The Police have approved an 800 seat capacity for the licensed areas.

## **CULTURE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE**

This proposal was presented to the Board's Culture and Recreation Committee on April 6, 2005. The Committee expressed concern that event planning decisions regarding park use are being made prior to Park Board approval. In addition, the extent of gating and admission fees in two major parks during a peak summer period concerned committee members. The event organizer informed the Committee that gating these parks is necessary to off-set the high costs associated with the event. However, the event organizer did reduce the size and scope of the gated area on Kits Point.

Since Sea Vancouver is a new event, further changes may be made to the program. Some of these changes may deviate from the Board's special event approval process. Given the short timeline, staff are asking that the General Manager be given the authority to approve any further decisions on behalf of the Board for this event.

## **SUMMARY**

Staff recommend that the Board approve the use of Creekside, Jericho and Kitsilano/Hadden/Vanier Parks for the Sea Vancouver Festival. This proposal is representative of the choices and difficult decisions the Board faces when approving large scale special events: gating events vs. loss of public access to parkland; neighbourhood concerns vs. the city's residents' desire for special events. The gating of these areas allows for diverse programming – access to the tall ships and the music/entertainment areas. The general public will benefit from having viewing access to the tall ships and water activities from various parks and beaches in English Bay and False Creek.

Prepared by:

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