

Date: February 20, 2006



**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Accomplishment Report 2005**

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board receive this report for information.*

## DISCUSSION

This report highlights the key accomplishments, enhanced programs and new services of the Board, staff and partners in support of the Strategic Plan in 2005.

### Overview of Programs and Services

The wide range of quality programs provided by the Park Board continues to enrich the lives of Vancouver's residents. Delivered directly and through partners, these parks and recreation programs contribute to building healthy communities and families and to a healthy environment and economy for the City. Many Park Board activities have a significant impact on people's lives. The Board continues to focus its energies where it can do the most good, while managing the challenges of an increasing population which is also increasingly diverse, an aging infrastructure, and the necessity to allocate limited resources to best address the needs of the public.

Amongst the diverse and popular Park Board programs and services are:

- 220 parks, representing 1,300 hectares or 11% of the City's land area
  - including city-wide parks and 3 major parks - Stanley Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and VanDusen Gardens
  - 14.3 million visits per year or 39,000 people per day to these 3 major parks.
- 23 community centres, 9 indoor and 6 outdoor pools, 8 ice rinks, 24 fitness centres
  - 8 million visits annually or 22,000 people per day.
- 3 full length golf courses and 3 pitch and putts
  - 303,000 rounds played annually on the courses
- 274 playing fields, 181 tennis courts, 67 other sports courts, 6 skate board parks and 150 children's playgrounds
- 18 kilometres of beaches

## **2005 Activities**

The year's many achievements included new and renovated parks, expanded and renewed community facilities, more ways to involve partners and the public, better technologies, easy access to information, updated policies and stronger environmental initiatives – all making Vancouver one of the most liveable cities in the world. The acceleration of important infrastructure renewal plans through capital funding for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, as approved during the year, will give the City long term legacies for sport and recreation.

## **Strategic Plan**

After extensive public consultation, the Park Board adopted a new Strategic Plan for 2005 – 2010. The plan includes a newly stated Mission and sets out priorities, values and direction for the organization. It links the work plans of all work units. It represents the collective ideas and vision of the Board and staff, with guidance from partners, stakeholders and the general public. Five clear strategic directions are laid out: Greening the Park Board, Engaging People, Working Together, Managing Resources and Meeting Future Challenges.

### **1. Greening the Park Board**

***Strategic Direction: “We will develop sustainable policies and practices to achieve environmental objectives while meeting needs of the community.”***

*The preservation and enhancement of the natural environment is a core responsibility of the Park Board. The organization is pursuing a more sustainable approach to providing programs and services.*

### **Environmental Leadership**

The Park Board continued to advocate for a healthy urban environment through Earth Day tree plantings and a celebration in Everett Crowley Park, with local volunteers and over 2,000 participants. An erosion control project was completed with community partners at the Kitsilano foreshore to address major site problems and preserve pathways and beach. New water conservation measures were put in place including centralized controls for irrigation systems, timers for fountains and water features, and conversion of ammonia compressors in ice rinks to recirculation systems, resulting in resource savings. Energy conservation and use of alternative energies continued to be a high priority, with increasing fleet replacement of large vehicles with smaller ones such as SMART cars, and with high efficiency boilers installed at two pools. Green building technology was approved for the designs of the new Sunset Community Centre and # 1 Kingsway Civic Centre projects by integrating the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold standard.

## **Sustainability Practices**

The City policy on ethical purchasing was adopted, demonstrating the Park Board's ongoing commitment to sustainability and fair trade. The Community Gardens Policy was reviewed and updated to better reflect the diversity of sites and community and recreation development. Staff began research on planting fruit trees in parks to offer environmental, educational and community benefits. A writing contest for residents, called "Tree Tales", was held to raise awareness of and celebrate the urban forest.

## **2. Engaging People**

***Strategic Direction: "We will integrate the concept of wellness into our park and recreation services and provide opportunities for everyone to access these services."***

*The concept of wellness means practicing all the things that keep people well and happy: enjoying the arts, learning new skills and building community spirit. All people must be able to participate.*

## **Arts in Everyday Life**

Public art remained an important part of the Park Board's promotion of the arts. A Tai Chi pavilion was installed in Strathcona Park, and mosaics were placed in Cathedral, Strathcona and Victory Square Parks. Approvals were given for a new Coast Salish gateway in Stanley Park and a new Khenko Heron sculpture in George Wainborn Park. More than a dozen large pieces of art were installed across city parks as part of the International Sculpture Biennale Exhibit.

## **Artists in Residence**

Artists completed six month residencies at four community centres; their work included teaching programs and participating in special events, celebrations and festivals at the centres.

## **Neighborhood Matching Program**

Four community building projects were funded through this program, which provides funds to groups who want to improve and develop parks and facilities on park land.

## **Special Events**

A first time celebration, the Rain or Shine Festival, was held in Stanley Park to showcase the Park Board's diverse programs. "Monsters in the Meadow" was again the theme of free outdoor summer movie screenings for the public in Stanley Park. Over 6,000 people attended this summer movie event.

### **Increased Accessibility**

Customer service and access continued to be improved through new technology. On line recreation registration was expanded to 14 community centres, allowing residents to sign up for programs from their home computer. On line reservation proved to be popular with golfers at the three full length municipal courses, providing faster and more convenient booking options, and it was extended to include more advanced tee times.

### **Active Living**

The Park Board is champion of personal and community health and well being. A marketing campaign, comprised of advertisements and posters at bus shelters, city facilities, and a local newspaper, was launched to promote Park Board rinks, pools and fitness centres. *Go Play!* encouraged residents to get active at their fun, affordable and accessible neighbourhood facility. The Board approved a long term plan and strategy to guide decisions for skate parks in Vancouver. The youth driven program called *GetOut!* promoted activity in, and supported program funding for sport, recreation and the arts. Projects during the year included multicultural youth soccer, My Circle (outdoor recreation program), Outside the Box (highlighted performance talents of youth), and Get Moving (promoted trips and healthy play options). The Park Board participated with Animal Control and Police in the new *Rex in the City* education and enforcement program around responsible dog ownership.

### **3. Working Together**

***Strategic Direction: “We will integrate public involvement in decision making and services and expand partnerships with community groups and other agencies.”***

*The Park Board works with many individuals and organizations to create park and recreation opportunities.*

### **Partner and Stakeholder Relationships**

After extensive community involvement, a management plan was finalized for the future care and protection of heavily wooded Everett Crowley Park. Following the recommendations of the Joint Operating Agreement Task Force, a flexible new framework was created for partnering with the community associations who jointly deliver community recreation programs. Working with the City and community partners, the Park Board developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Carnegie Centre to clarify roles, responsibilities, planning and communication for Oppenheimer Park.

### **Public Involvement**

The Board of Commissioners again held six of its regular meetings out in the community to make it easier for the public to attend. At a series of workshops, residents and stakeholders were invited to learn about programs and services, share priorities and ideas, and provide input to both the 2005 Operating Budget and the 2006 – 2008 Capital Plan. Public consultations were held on a number of major projects and issues around parks

including: China Creek Park South improvements; 37<sup>th</sup> & Oak park site development; the future of Mount Pleasant Park, pool, community centre and child care; Marpole park site design; and the new East Fraserlands community park and recreation plans. The number of dog off-leash parks was expanded to 31 and off-leash hours were extended in several parks following public consultation.

#### **4. Managing Resources**

*Strategic Direction: “We will strengthen fiscal responsibility and pursue alternative sources of funding.”*

*Keeping Vancouver’s parks and recreation facilities operating efficiently requires an ongoing investment of financial capital.*

#### **Financial Accountability**

##### **Operating Budget**

The Park Board closely monitored and analyzed spending, evaluated progress, improved customer services and balanced the 2005 Global Budget of \$53.4 million.

There were a number of revenue related challenges during the year, including lower than budgeted revenues from golf, concessions, parking, leases and Bloedel Conservatory. However, recreation revenues were above budget in all areas, and Stanley Park, VanDusen, the marinas, and our pitch and putts all managed to meet or exceed budgeted revenues. Expenditures were also curtailed to alleviate revenues shortfalls. Other challenges included the extended closure of Renfrew and Killarney Pools, implementing the Ethical Purchasing Policy and managing new and redeveloped parks (George Wainborn and Downtown Skate Plaza).

The overall effect was that the Board was able to manage its revenue challenges and meet budget. At year end, a surplus of \$541,000 was recorded for the Operating Budget. This surplus was attributed largely to savings in utility and city equipment costs (\$427,000). The remaining \$114,000 surplus represented approximately 0.2% of the Board’s net operating budget.

##### **Capital Budget**

In 2005, the Capital Budget expenditures totalled \$20.3 million. These monies were used to acquire, construct, maintain and renew the large, diverse and, in some cases, ageing system of buildings and open spaces. Capital projects usually span several years, so the spending in any one year does not necessarily reflect the total cost of a project. For 2005, approximately 58% was directed at facilities development and 30% at park development with the remainder equally split between land acquisition and project management.

The largest single 2005 project, the reconstruction of Killarney Pool, accounted for more than 1/3 of the funds spent in 2005 at \$7.3 million. Other large projects worked on in

2005 included replacement of Mount Pleasant Community Centre project (\$2.2 million), the upgrade project of Queen Elizabeth Park (\$2.1 million), new synthetic turf fields (\$1.5 million), replacement of Sunset Community Centre project (\$1.3 million), renovation of Champlain Heights Community Centre (\$1.2 million), land acquisition for the Mount Pleasant Community Centre replacement project (\$1.2 million) and major maintenance of other facilities (\$1.1 million).

### **Purchasing Policies**

More effective, standard purchasing policies were implemented for contracting of goods and services, and hiring of and contracting with consultants; a new policy was introduced for energy efficient purchasing.

### **Resource Stabilization and Diversification**

#### **Capital Plan**

After extensive public and stakeholder consultation, a new Capital Plan was developed to deliver improvements to parks and recreation over the next three years. An historic high level of \$80.0 million for 2006 – 2008 was approved by residents in the municipal election including \$39.5 million for community Olympic legacy facilities. About \$5.0 million for Olympic Legacies was a one-time opportunity of funding from the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee (VANOC) for reconstruction of two ice rinks at Trout Lake and Killarney. Through the Capital Plan, the Park Board is keeping pace with infrastructure renewal and the Olympic-related projects help to accelerate these efforts.

To protect and increase facility amenities and programs and broaden opportunities for resident participation, donations and grants from new sources were sought. Fundraising and development programs were initiated with community partners, government and the non-profit and private sectors to help add stability to finances, with a total of more than \$750,000 raised by year end.

### **Training and Development**

As an organization supportive of continual learning, creativity and innovation, the Park Board continued to place a high priority on employee training in 2005. Employees made more than 4,000 bookings for courses during the year, which covered such areas as health and workplace safety, technical updates, organizational and managerial skills, computer training, and Park Board specific instruction.

## **5. Meeting Future Challenges**

***Strategic Direction: “We will renew ageing infrastructure and adapt park and recreation facilities to accommodate growth and meet changing needs.”***

*As the City’s population continues to grow, the Park Board will need more parkland and recreation facilities to meet these demands.*

## **New Parks and Park Renewals**

Two new neighbourhood parks were opened in 2005. Rosemary Brown Park, named after the former MLA and women's activist, is located on an historic brewery site in Kitsilano, and features rose gardens, flower beds, shrubs, trees and benches. Sahalli Park, from the First Nations Chinook jargon meaning "high ground" was named following a public naming process. Visitors now enjoy paths, a picnic site, playground, viewing knoll, lawns, trees and shrubs in this Mount Pleasant green space.

Following community consultation, a number of parks were redeveloped. On the east side, Pandora Park was upgraded with a new playground and walkways while the Falaise Park renewal included a unique wetland garden. Renovations to Kingcrest Park improved safety and recreation needs of the local community. Construction neared completion on the upgrade to Quilchena Park on Vancouver's west side, and featured a new skate board facility, garden and plazas. Nine children's playgrounds throughout the City were redeveloped: Cariboo Park, Robson Park, CRAB Park at Portside, Charleson Park, Killarney Park, Pandora Park, Teaswamp Park, Trafalgar Park and Creekside Park.

## **Community and Recreation Centre Upgrades**

The Park Board continued its long term renewal plans for community centres, rinks and pools with a number of upgraded facilities completed and opened in 2005. The Millennium Sports Centre was officially opened in Nat Bailey Stadium Park, as the new home to the Phoenix Gymnastics and Pacific Indoor Bowling Clubs. The new addition to the Champlain Heights Community Centre opened, providing child care space, a multi-purpose room and a larger fitness centre. The reconstructed Renfrew Pool opened as the first step in the Park Board's aquatics renewal plan; it featured extensive upgrades to pool and deck areas.

Under construction at year end were the Killarney Leisure Pool, the first new pool in the city in 25 years; the new Sunset Community Centre, replacing one of Vancouver's oldest facilities; and #1 Kingsway, the civic centre which will include the new Mount Pleasant Community Centre.

## **Other Facilities**

The new Watermark Restaurant at Kitsilano Beach opened, and included a new year round concession, change and wash rooms, and life guard tower. After extensive consultation, a new synthetic turf playing field neared completion at Kerrisdale Park/Point Grey Secondary School.

## **Future Legacies**

The Official Development Plan was approved for the Southeast False Creek site, with new waterfront parks, a community centre and a non-motorized boating facility. The redeveloped area will first serve as the Athletes Village for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, and then be built as a mixed use, model sustainable community. A Master Plan

was finalized for the Olympic Curling Venue. After the Games, it will become a new recreation complex with pool, community centre, rink, curling club and library.

## **6. Awards**

*“We will be recognized for leadership and excellence.”*

Reclamation of an under-utilized site earned the Park Board a Regional Honour Award for creative urban enhancement from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects for the new Downtown Skate Plaza. This award was shared with van der Zalm + Associates and New Line Skateparks.

The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Regional Merit Award was given for Phase II of Harbour Green Park recognizing the Park Board and PWL Partnership Landscape Architects.

Outstanding achievement in cultivation of hardy palms on English Bay was recognized by the Pacific Northwest Palm and Exotic Plant Society’s Landscaping Award.

The Park Board’s public website won an Award of Merit from the Canadian Public Relations Society, for strategic development and relevance to overall communications objectives.

Stanley Park’s Cob House earthen architecture structure earned an Award of Excellence for Innovation by the Vancouver Regional Construction Association.

## **SUMMARY**

In 2005, the Park Board was guided by the directions of the Strategic Plan. The plan ensures that the organization remains relevant, manages its resources wisely, takes advantage of opportunities, and provides quality parks and recreation services that benefit residents, communities and the environment. Staff are to be commended for their hard work and commitment to achieve these accomplishments.

Looking back over the achievements of 2005, the Board made significant progress to improve and enhance parks and recreation programs to residents which aligned with our goals to champion active and healthy living.

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