

Date: October 20, 2006



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Vancouver Sport Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve Park Board staff leadership of the development of a Vancouver Sport Strategy, as described in this report.

POLICY

On June 26, 2006 Park Board reviewed and endorsed a Council report entitled *Sport Hosting and Vancouver Sport Strategy*, referencing the need to “develop a comprehensive Vancouver Sport Strategy.”

BACKGROUND

On July 13, 2006, Council approved the development “of a comprehensive Sport Strategy to guide the direction of sport infrastructure, programming and support for events, to be developed in conjunction with the sport community, sport tourism stakeholders and other groups.” Council further directed that the Board of Parks and Recreation be requested to lead and facilitate the project and report back with details on resources and funding required to complete the study.”

The recommendation to develop the sport strategy was made in a staff report entitled “Sport Hosting Policy and Grant Programme.” The Sport Hosting Policy report noted the lack of “a comprehensive strategy to optimize the potential for all participants, from grass roots to elite athletes, at all stages from playground to podium, and for all members of our community.” The report proposed that such a strategy be developed, with “key areas of focus to include:

- Inventory and assessment of sport facilities such as gymnasias, fields and tracks;
- Innovations for potential facility development funding models;
- Inventory of local skill development and participation programmes;
- Coordination of permitting to maximize utilization;
- Sport Event Hosting capability and coordination;
- Communication and networks of various sport groups;
- Planning for growth”.

The report furthermore proposed that the strategy be developed “with the involvement of the local sport community, key stakeholders and other organizations such as the Vancouver School Board, local colleges, universities and membership based clubs” and that “broad community consultation should be undertaken as a key component of this process.”

Interest in the development of a civic sport strategy began with the selection of Vancouver as host city for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. As well, an increasing number of sport related initiatives, many generated or inspired by the Olympics, are requiring support, regulation or other kind of attention from City Council and the Park Board. These initiatives are of various types, including the following:

- Competitive sporting events choosing or considering Vancouver as a venue prior to or after the 2010 Olympics: FIFA World Youth Championship, 2009 World Police and Fire Games, International Triathlon.
- New policy to provide financial assistance to sport-related events or tournaments: Vancouver Sport Hosting Policy, financial contribution to HostingBC.
- Programs to encourage broader public participation in sport and fitness activities: Active Communities Strategy, Get Out, MoreSports.
- Development or renewal of public sport and recreation infrastructure: For example, the Park Board programs for community centre, aquatic services and playing field renewal; the Skateboard Strategy.

DISCUSSION

Park Board staff are preparing a Council report on the development of a sports strategy with input and advice from representatives of Sport BC, Tourism Vancouver, BC Ministry of Sport, Tourism and the Arts, Legacies Now, the UBC Department of Athletics and Recreation and the Vancouver Field Sports Federation. Once finalized, the sport strategy report will be circulated to the Board, and presented to the City Services and Budgets Committee on November 16, 2006.

The report outlines the process for developing the Sport Strategy, including details on objectives, methodologies, phasing and resource requirements. Council will be asked to include budget allocation for this initiative in the 2007 Operating Budget, without offset from the Park Board allocations.

Development of the sport strategy will be a major project for 2007, and will require the dedication of Park Board resources in the following areas:

- One Park Board staff person to serve on the Project Steering Committee, which will also include representation from other departments having interests in various aspects of the sport strategy.
- The Manager of Planning and Research to supervise the project manager (a temporary fulltime appointment for six months, charged to the project budget).
- Staff assistance (primarily funded from the project budget) for research, clerical support, organization and operation of consultation events.

Also factored in to the budget request is provision for consultant support to supplement the staff effort in more specialized areas such as:

- Research methodologies;
- Sports governance;
- Events organization;
- Survey design and administration ;
- Public consultation and group facilitation;
- Zoning and facility development processes, and
- Facilities assessment.

The Council report also proposes to convene a review committee of external experts and stakeholders, who would work with staff to assess the project outcomes at key milestones and advise on subsequent work elements to be pursued.

Park Board is recommended to endorse the development of the sport strategy because of the anticipated benefits of the initiative. When complete, the sports strategy will provide:

1. An overview of the entire continuum of sport in Vancouver, including
 - a. Unaffiliated sport activity and informal “pick-up” games;
 - b. Community-based sport programming and leagues;
 - c. Provincial, national and international amateur athletic training and events; and the
 - d. Commercial/professional sports sector.
2. A benchmark of current City and Park Board involvement with sport, and the respective roles of both bodies;
3. Analysis and policy recommendations focused on those aspects of sport where the city has the means and the authority to make a positive contribution, and where identifiable benefits to the city are most likely to be realized; and
4. A strategy and sequence for the implementation of proposed actions and policies.

The Sport Strategy will be a valuable reference document with respect to future decisions by Council and Park Board, and administrative actions by City staff. Beyond providing benchmark information on sport activities and facilities in the City, the Strategy will articulate roles and objectives for the City and the Park Board regarding improvements in the following areas:

- Logistical support for and coordination of sport events;
- Facility booking, permitting and allocation processes;
- Programs to encourage and support public participation in sport;
- Communications and networking with and between sport organizations;
- Liaison and policy alignment between the City, senior governments and other concerned agencies on sports related matters;
- Priorities in Vancouver for sport program and facility development and renewal;
- Innovative capital funding approaches, particularly ones which leverage City funds with assistance from other sources; and
- Planning and development approval processes for sport facilities.

The development and conclusions of the sport strategy initiative, including research findings, issues identification and policy options, will be reported to Council and Park Board. Recommendations will be made as to implementation steps in terms of timing, costs, investment priorities, and any other proposed actions or policy enactments which may emerge through the project development process.

SUMMARY

This report informs the Board of an upcoming report to City Council outlining the process, resource requirements and anticipated benefits of a project to develop a civic sports strategy, and seeks Board approval of this initiative. Once finalized, the Council report will be circulated to the Board, and presented to the City Services and Budgets Committee on November 16, 2006.

Prepared by:

Mark Vulliamy
Planning and Operations
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC
:mv