

**Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver Aquarium  
Community Consultation on the Proposed  
Aquarium Revitalization and Expansion in Stanley Park**

**DATE:** September 5, 2006  
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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|            |                                  |          |
|------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION</b>              | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>PURPOSE</b>                   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>CONSULTATION METHODS</b>      | <b>1</b> |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>PRE-CONSULTATION FINDINGS</b> | <b>4</b> |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>CONSULTATION TOPICS</b>       | <b>6</b> |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>SCHEDULE</b>                  | <b>7</b> |
| <b>7.0</b> | <b>REPORTING OUT</b>             | <b>8</b> |

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Vancouver Aquarium is proposing a revitalization and expansion of the Aquarium. The Vancouver Park Board has directed that a public consultation process be conducted about this proposal under the co-management of the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Aquarium. A Consultation Steering Committee of Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver Aquarium staff, and Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd. (the firm contracted to design and implement the consultation) will manage the consultation process. The following describes this public consultation process.

## 2.0 PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The purpose of the public consultation program is to:

- a. **Inform the community and stakeholders** about the options available to revitalize and expand the Vancouver Aquarium and inform Vancouver residents of opportunities to participate in the consultation process.
- b. **Gather input and feedback** regarding the options for revitalization and expansion of the Vancouver Aquarium through a consultation that is thorough and open to all Vancouver residents.
- c. **Summarize community and stakeholder input** regarding the options for revitalization and expansion of the Vancouver Aquarium.
- d. **Consideration of input** by the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Aquarium regarding revitalization and expansion options for the Vancouver Aquarium.

Note: **public input is considered** along with technical and financial inputs when the Vancouver Aquarium makes its final decision about the revitalization program.

## 3.0 CONSULTATION METHODS

The consultation program will consist of a variety of consultation methods. These methods are described in detail below:

- a) **Pre-consultation**
  - An independent polling firm will conduct 3 focus groups to test consultation materials to ensure they are clear and effective.
  - Interviews will be held with Stakeholder Groups to gather feedback on the consultation process.
- b) **Discussion Guide<sup>1</sup> and Feedback Form**

A *Discussion Guide* will provide key information about the Aquarium, background on the project and impacts on the Park, and the consultation

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<sup>1</sup> The Discussion Guide will be a short booklet that provides details of the proposed revitalization and expansion and identifies impacts and benefits of the project.

topics. A Feedback Form will be provided to gather public input on each consultation topic and encourage public comment.

- c) **Display Boards**  
Display boards will reflect the content of the Discussion Guide.
- d) **Scale Model**  
A model of the proposed revitalization and expansion will be developed for use at the open houses.
- e) **PowerPoint**  
A PowerPoint presentation will be used in the small group stakeholder meetings.
- f) **Newspaper Insert** (September 22)  
A newspaper insert will be circulated through *The Vancouver Sun*. The insert will present a summary of the information in the Discussion Guide, have a feedback component and provide information on opportunities to participate in the consultation.
- g) **Website** (September 18)  
A separate web page [www.aquariumconsultation.ca](http://www.aquariumconsultation.ca) will contain all of the information relevant to the consultation and have a web-based, interactive feedback form. The project will consider web-based feedback from GVRD residents.
- h) **Public Notification**  
The following methods will be used to ensure that Vancouver residents are aware of the consultation and their opportunity to participate in open houses or through the web, e-mail, and fax:
  - i. The newspaper insert discussed above will include information about the consultation process and the venues for open houses.
  - ii. Advertising will be placed in *The Vancouver Sun*, *The Courier*, *Ming Pao*, and *Indo-Canadian Times*.
  - iii. E-mails will be sent from the relevant Park Board e-mail lists, the Aquarium e-mail list and organizations will be asked to e-mail their memberships.
  - iv. Telephone calls and e-mails will be used to encourage stakeholders to participate in the stakeholder meetings and they will be asked to notify their contacts about the opportunity to participate in the consultation.
  - v. Notices for posting will be provided to community centers.
  - vi. Signs will be placed in Park information facilities and the City of Vancouver website and newsletters.
  - vii. Signs will be placed within the Aquarium and on the project site.
  - viii. The Discussion Guide will identify opportunities for participation.
- i) **7 Stakeholder Meetings** (Weeks of September 18 and September 25)  
The Park Board/Aquarium consultation will include a minimum of seven stakeholder meetings. Although each meeting will be focused on communities of interest, many stakeholder groups will be invited to attend. For instance, we might have a business community meeting and invite

organizations with tourism interests, the Vancouver Board of Trade, and other businesses interested in the Aquarium. This will ensure a broad range of stakeholders are invited.

- j) **5 Consultation Focus Groups** (Week of September 25)  
In response to the Park Board Planning Committee, the Park Board/Aquarium consultation will include a series of Focus Group Meetings. Those attending these meetings will be randomly selected from residents of Vancouver. Selection criteria will be established to ensure that the focus groups reflect the diversity of city residents.
- k) **Public Attitude Survey** (Week of October 2)  
A public attitude survey will be conducted near the end of the consultation and will include a sampling of regional as well as Vancouver residents.
- l) **Three Open Houses** (September 28 & 30, October 3)  
Open houses will be held in community centers in the West End, Vancouver's east side, and Vancouver's west side.
- m) **One-on-One Interviews** (Week of September 22 – Week of October 2)  
A series of one-on-one interviews will be conducted in approximately ten public locations, resulting in several hundred interviews. These interviews will be conducted in September and October.
- n) **Feedback**  
Feedback will be gathered using the following methods:
  - i. Discussion Guide Feedback Form – the Discussion Guide will include a feedback form that individuals can fill out at consultation events or return by mail or fax. This will include quantitative and qualitative questions.
  - ii. E-mail – individuals can send e-mails that respond to the consultation topics.
  - iii. Phone – individuals can call to provide input.
  - iv. The newspaper insert will include a feedback form that can be mailed or faxed back.
  - v. The website will have an interactive feedback form.
  - vi. The one-on-one interviews will include a feedback mechanism.
  - vii. Notes will be taken at stakeholder meetings and focus groups.
  - viii. Written submissions may be provided to the consultation.
  - ix. A public attitude survey will be conducted near the end of the consultation and will include a sampling of regional as well as Vancouver residents.
- o) **Consultation Summary Report**  
Feedback will be summarized by Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd. in a Consultation Summary Report and provided to the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Aquarium for their consideration.

## 4.0 Pre-Consultation Update & Findings

### Pre-Consultation Interviews (July – August)

At the June 20<sup>th</sup> Vancouver Parks & Recreation Planning Meeting, the Park Board suggested that the consultation plan be circulated to a selection of stakeholders in advance of the consultation period in order to obtain feedback on the consultation process. The purpose of these meetings was also to obtain public input on the overall consultation. A total of eight interviews were conducted in July and August.

Overall, stakeholders found the consultation process to be very thorough and clear. Stakeholders responded well to the broad range of methods being used to obtain public feedback. Respondents also felt positively about the variety of community members that will have an opportunity to participate (ie. general public as well as community organizations through small group stakeholder meetings).

Other stakeholder feedback emphasized:

- The importance of being able to differentiate Vancouver from GVRD resident input.
  - Action: Respondents will be required to identify their location of residence.
- The ability to verify respondents' location of residence and Vancouver residents' responses should be weighted more heavily than GVRD responses.
  - Action: A third party research company, Synovate, will verify respondent's location of residence.
- The need to provide equal opportunity for public comment (whether opposed or in support of the proposal). Concern was raised with regard to the average person not being heard if well-organized groups dominate the spotlight at public events.
  - Action: A wide variety of consultation methods will be utilized to maximize the open public feedback process.

In terms of how to make the process more complete, the majority of stakeholders felt the process is complete the way it is. However, a couple of stakeholders emphasized the importance of making the selection criteria and list of participants for the focus groups and small group stakeholder meetings more transparent. Lastly, a few stakeholders commented on the need to clarify the timeline and steps taken after a final Park Board decision is made. Action:

- The focus groups will be selected randomly to reflect the population of Vancouver including gender, age, ethnicity, and area of residence.
- Stakeholder groups have been identified from lists provided by the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Aquarium, and the City of Vancouver website.
- Next steps following the Park Board decision are now identified in the Discussion Guide.

### Focus Group Testing of Discussion Guide (August 9 & 10)

Synovate, a third party market research firm, was commissioned to help evaluate the first draft of the Discussion Guide and Feedback Form questionnaire through the use of general public input using a focus group methodology. In total, three groups of the general public were recruited and asked to comment on the Guide content and layout and on the Feedback Form questionnaire.

Summary of Key Findings are as follows:

- 1) There needs to be much more attention paid to the needs of the marine wildlife in the document (for example, a separate section devoted to the specific changes to the marine life facilities).
  - a. Action: Revised Discussion Guide includes a section on the rationale for the revitalization and expansion, including addressing the needs of all animals at the Aquarium.
- 2) Given the amount of visual information in the document a larger format might help aid readability and comprehension.
  - a. Action: Enlarged Discussion Guide format size (moved from 8.5 x 11 for 10 x 12).
- 3) Maps need to have legends and keys to aid understanding of where each of the elements being proposed is located, including the trees proposed for removal.
  - a. Action: Maps now include legends.
- 4) A complete list of proposal elements should be placed on the page opposite to the map identifying the location of the elements.
  - a. Action: Change reflected in revised Discussion Guide.
- 5) The feedback form “feels” right. Though some wonder why certain topics aren’t measured. Ensure Guide content matches that of feedback form.
  - a. Action: Change reflected in revised Discussion Guide.
- 6) The question asking public for their level of overall support of the proposal, did not always appear to be balanced – there are more positive examples than negative ones.
  - a. Action: Question revised to reflect revised Discussion Guide.
- 7) Confusion about why the by-law section is included in the document. On one hand, the bylaws (Section 6) seem to appear out of place – it’s an item for a separate discussion or debate. Yet, at the same time there is acknowledgement that it is an issue that is intrinsic to the nature of all Aquariums.
  - a. Action: An explanation has been added to revised Discussion Guide.
- 8) Strive for a greater degree of consistency of headings, bylines and greater clarity in what the public is being asked to choose between.
  - a. Action: Reflected in revised Discussion Guide.

- 9) The cover picture should have a more overt association with the Vancouver Aquarium.
  - a. Action: Revised Discussion Guide features a photo of the current plaza area in front of the Aquarium entrance, including the Bill Reid sculpture.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION TOPICS**

The following are the proposed consultation topics which the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Aquarium have jointly developed. Background and more detailed information about the topics will be provided in the Discussion Guide.

Most questions in the feedback form will include an agreement scale or, in the case where there is a clear choice, participants will be asked for their preference.

The following agreement scale will be used:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Strongly disagree

### **Consultation Topics:**

#### **Impacts on Stanley Park of the Revitalization and Expansion**

1. Amount of land required for expansion
2. Greenspace
3. Trees
4. Public open spaces

#### **Vancouver Aquarium Design Options for the Revitalization and Expansion**

5. Aquarium building entrance
6. Free Public Viewing of Aquarium Animals
7. Salmon Hatchery
8. Viewing above water (outdoors / within Aquarium footprint)
9. Viewing below water (indoors / within Aquarium footprint)
10. Food services in the Aquarium
11. Children's space in the Aquarium

#### **12. Level of Support for the Revitalization and Expansion**

#### **13. Stanley Park By-law: Rules Governing Whales and Dolphins (cetaceans) in Captivity**

## 6.0 SCHEDULE

### JULY - AUGUST

#### Pre-Consultation Process

##### **Stakeholder Interviews**

We contacted eight key stakeholder groups, provided them with the consultation plan and discussed with them any adjustments they would like to see made to the plan.

##### **Focus Groups** (Aug 9 & 10)

An independent polling firm conducted three focus groups in advance of the consultation, to test consultation materials to ensure they are clear and effective.

#### **Preparation of Consultation Materials:**

- › Discussion Guide & Feedback Form
- › Newspaper Insert
- › Newspaper Ads
- › Display Boards
- › Website
- › Scale Model

### SEPTEMBER

#### **Implementation of the Consultation Program**

Full Implementation of the Consultation Program will begin the week of September 18, 2006 – subject to Park Board approval.

September 18

Launch consultation website

September 16

Advertisements about opportunities to participate will run in local papers and will be posted in community centres and other locations.

September 22

Newspaper insert placed in *The Vancouver Sun*

September 18 – October 6

Conduct open houses and stakeholder meetings

Conduct consultation focus group meetings

Conduct one-on-one interviews

Conduct a public attitude survey



## **OCTOBER**

October 13  
Consultation Deadline

## **NOVEMBER**

November 14  
Data analysis, finalize consultation summary report

Late November – Park Board Meeting

### **7.0 REPORTING OUT**

The Consultation Summary Report will be presented to the Park Board and Aquarium Board for their consideration and made available on the web and by request to the community and stakeholders.