

Date: February 15, 2008



**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Accomplishments Report 2007**

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board receives this report for information.*

## BACKGROUND

Mission: *"to provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit people, communities and the environment".*

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is responsible for:

*People:* leisure and sports, education, arts and culture, youth, children and seniors, ensuring accessibility

*Places:* community centres, rinks, pools, fitness centres, restaurants, concessions, marinas, clubhouses

*Parks:* city-wide and neighborhood greenspaces, remnant woodlands, beaches, display gardens, playing fields, conservatory, golf courses, street trees

The wide range of park and recreation programs, delivered directly and through partners, contributes to healthy communities and families and to a healthy environment and economy for the City. Many activities benefit people's lives no matter their age, ability, interest or economic means. The Park Board champions personal and community well-being - connecting neighbours, improving the natural landscape and keeping lives in balance.

Programs are diverse and popular:

- 223 parks, comprising 1,296 hectares or 11% of the City's land area
- 23 community centres, 9 indoor and 6 outdoor pools, 8 ice rinks, 24 fitness centres
- 3 full-length golf courses and 3 pitch & putt golf courses
- 129 playing fields, 180 tennis courts, 57 other sport courts, 6 skateboard parks
- 151 children's playgrounds, 133 diamonds, 7 cricket pitches
- 18 kilometres of beaches, 2 marinas
- 133,141 street trees

## **DISCUSSION**

2007 was defined by two major challenges:

- the continuing aftermath of the devastating windstorms of late 2006 and subsequent restoration of Stanley Park, and
- the three month civic work stoppage which closed Park Board facilities and suspended normal services from mid July to mid-October.

Both situations had significant impacts on Park Board operations. The tumultuous year necessitated quick crisis response, redirection of resources throughout the organization and an unwavering focus on continued delivery, where possible, of quality parks and recreation programs to residents and visitors.

This report highlights the key accomplishments, enhanced programs and new services of the Board, staff and partners in 2007.

### **Strategic Priorities**

The Park Board Commissioners set priorities in their first year of office which identified important initiatives in addition to existing commitments and work plans of staff. These priorities along with the five-year Strategic Plan will assist the Park Board to stay relevant, manage its resources wisely and deliver on its mission through 2010.

The Board is committed to measuring its performance against organizational objectives in order to remain accountable, continuously improve, and evaluate success. A number of performance indicators are presented in each priority area to track progress. However, it is important to note that a number of 2007 performance measures are affected by the 12 weeks work stoppage.

### **2007 Accomplishments**

#### **Physical Activity**

*“Increase participation rates in physical activities, especially in sports...”*

As leaders in the promotion and pursuit of active living, the Park Board provides opportunities and access to keep citizens well and healthy.

A number of Park Board activities and programs were enhanced to support this goal:

- Vancouver Active Communities was expanded with new initiatives to inspire and equip residents and staff to become 20% more active by 2010: a broadly based VACNet Advisory Committee was created; the Active Adventure Passport implemented with the Vancouver School Board; web site improvements made; ‘Red Fox Waking’ Active Outreach program developed for the aboriginal community; and city-wide Step Out! walks publicized.
- The recreation marketing campaign “Go Play!” continued and was expanded, promoting attendance at rinks, pools and fitness centres and encouraging active living.

- The waterfront inventory database was completed and posted online; the reference guide includes all park waterfront features, structures and usage.
- Stanley Park's Ted and Mary Greig Rhododendron Garden database was finalized, with self-guided walking tours developed and posted on the website.
- Internet bookings became the most popular way to reserve golf at the three full-length courses, with 60% more golfers choosing the advance booking option to reserve games.
- New scan-able Flexi Passes and 10 visit cards with photo ID were introduced for pools and fitness centres, providing faster service and quicker renewals.
- Communication strategies continued to ensure an increasing number of residents were kept abreast of Park Board activities and their benefits: the Annual Report (published in both English and Chinese for the second year) and the semi-annual Leisure Guide reached more diverse audiences; major enhancements were put in place for the design, content and navigation of [vancouverparks.ca](http://vancouverparks.ca), with more than 2 million annual visits recorded.

### ***Performance Measures***

*Park Board neighborhood facilities continue to offer fun, affordable and accessible recreation. Income at pools, rinks and fitness centres reflects user participation.*

#### *Revenues at Pools (admissions, rentals, lessons)*

*2005 - \$4.2 million*

*2006 - \$5.1 million*

*2007 - \$3.8 million*

#### *Revenues at Rinks (admissions, rentals, lessons)*

*2005 - \$1.4 million*

*2006 - \$1.9 million*

*2007 - \$1.5 million*

#### *Revenues at Fitness Centres (admissions, rentals, lessons)*

*2005 - \$1.4 million*

*2006 - \$1.5 million*

*2007 - \$1.3 million*

*Recreation related website visits account for 30% of the top 60 visited pages on [vancouverparks.ca](http://vancouverparks.ca) (up from 27% a year ago).*

#### *Total Web Site Visits*

*2005 - 1.6 million*

*2006 - 2.5 million*

*2007 - 2.3 million*

### **Artificial Turf Fields**

***“Accelerate the artificial turf capital program and expand plan for playing fields...”***

To add capacity for the growing number of field sport users, the Park Board has a long-term capital funding plan for a total of six additional artificial turf sport fields by 2011.

In 2007, construction of a new synthetic turf field was completed at Vancouver Technical Secondary School to open in Spring 2008; this East Vancouver project was another collaboration with the Vancouver School Board.

### ***Performance Measures***

*The Park Board continues to work closely with the School Board and community sports groups to maximize field use through development of artificial turfs and other initiatives.*

*# Artificial sports fields available*

*2005 - 3*

*2006 - 4*

*2007 - 4*

*Annual hours of permitted (booked) artificial field use*

*2005 - 4,086*

*2006 - 5,135*

*2007 - 5,550*

### **Public Consultation**

***“Develop better strategies and techniques to involve the public, as a cornerstone of decision-making...”***

The Park Board listens to and actively seeks the ideas of partners, stakeholders, employees and the public. Public meetings, open houses and workshops are opportunities to have dialogue directly to share information, build consensus, reduce conflicts, and plan together for the future.

2007 examples of this commitment to public consultation:

- 15 open house and workshop events were hosted to give residents an opportunity to review and provide input into concepts, designs and plans for the new Trout Lake rink, Stanley Park restoration, Southeast False Creek parks and community centre, Vancouver Technical artificial turf, Oppenheimer Park renewal, Queen Elizabeth Park observation tower proposal, Olympic live sites, and China Creek South Park upgrade.
- Four community board meetings were held out in the neighbourhoods to bring decision-making closer to residents and make it easier for them to attend.

- Staff, stakeholders and residents were invited to learn more about and give input to the 2008 Operating Budget through a budget information process available via the website and at community centres.
- Work of the resident based Dogs Strategy Task Force was concluded and a summary report made about urban dog issues.
- New Naming Rights and Commemorative Naming Policies were approved, providing guidelines and a decision-making framework for naming Park Board facilities.
- A new process around naming parks was finalized, to give greater consistency and more public input.

### ***Performance Measures***

*Residents are invited to be part of the discussions and decisions around park and facility development.*

*Public Consultations Conducted*

*2005 - 33*

*2006 - 39*

*2007 - 15*

*The Park Board works to build collaborative strategies with other major agencies.*

*Agreements signed with community groups, governments and independent boards*

*2005 - 1*

*2006 - 7*

*2007 - 12*

### **Enterprise Financing**

***“Develop new, creative and responsible ways to develop additional revenues to augment Park Board core business, provide better service and meet future needs...”***

Keeping budgets under control and facilities operating efficiently are priorities. The Park Board is committed to maximizing available funds, exploring new funding sources and demonstrating financial accountability.

In 2007 the Board’s Operating Budget was significantly impacted by the 12 week work stoppage both in terms of services to the public and financial results. Revenues were below budget in all areas except Marinas, leases and cost recovery operations in arboriculture, facility and park maintenance. Expenses were below budget in all service areas, due to savings from the work stoppage. As of the end of 2007, Park Board had financial savings of \$3,445,878 attributed to the work stoppage and a small operating deficit (non-work stoppage related) of \$74,181 or 0.1%.

New funding and cost-saving initiatives in 2007 include:

- The successful fundraising and development program raised just under \$1 million through donations, with 20% of these funds contributing new park amenities such as commemorative benches and trees.
- An additional \$9.5 million was pledged from the three levels of government together with more than 6,000 corporate and private donors towards the restoration of Stanley Park. This unprecedented level of support allowed the recovery of the park to proceed quickly and effectively against the \$9 million Restoration Plan.
- Special project funding from a major gift of \$275,000 was designated to support interpretive legacy panels as part of Stanley Park restoration and to help mount an exhibition with the Vancouver Museum around the park's 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Other special projects funded by donations were the Red Fox program which is designed to support aboriginal women with opportunities for increased wellness and activity levels. The Graeme Stamp Dedication for the creation of a seating area and walkway in the Coal Harbour Phase III development and the Robert Dehart donation which was for the development of a bench shelter in Stanley Park.

### ***Performance Measures***

*The Park Board seeks to reduce its reliance on tax payers and increase revenues from user fees and charges and business operations.*

*Share of total operating expenditure not funded by taxes.*

*2005 - \$33.2 million (38.6%)*

*2006 - \$36.1 million (39.5%)*

*2007 - \$28.2 million (36.4%)*

*Income generated from parking, golf, marinas and food operations helps to subsidize the delivery of other park and recreation programs.*

*Lease revenues*

*2005 - \$1.6 million*

*2006 - \$2.1 million*

*2007 - \$1.9 million*

*Concession revenues*

*2005 - \$2.7 million*

*2006 - \$3.1 million*

*2007 - \$2.5 million*

*Many residents choose to make a difference by investing in the future of parks and recreation.*

*Annual Donations and Commemorative Gifts*

*2005 - \$1 million*

*2006 - \$1.2 million*

*2007 - \$0.9 million (excluding Stanley Park Restoration)*

*Stanley Park Restoration Donations received in 2007*

*From the Federal Government - \$1 million*

*From the Provincial Government - \$2 million*

*From Corporations and the Public - \$3.1 million*

*Reserves protect the Park Board in case of extraordinary events as many activities are subject to external factors beyond the organization's control.*

*Reserve Balances*

*2005 - \$2.9 million*

*2006 - \$3.7 million*

*2007 - \$8.5 million (including Stanley Park Restoration)*

## **Infrastructure Renewal**

***“Pursue options to accelerate long-term reinvestment in ageing system...”***

The Park Board has made a commitment to meet the needs of the community, keep pace with population growth and stay in tune with changing demographics.

In 2007, Capital Budget expenditures totaled \$22 million. Capital projects usually span several years, so the spending in any one year does not necessarily reflect the total cost of a project. The reconstruction of the new Sunset Community Centre, which opened at year end, and the design for the replacement of Percy Norman Pool each accounted for \$3.8 million. Other large projects included synthetic fields (\$3.1 million), neighborhood parks (\$2.2 million), Killarney Rink (\$1.7 million), Trout Lake Rink (\$1 million), and the Hillcrest legacy facility (\$2 million).

During 2007, a number of park and facility projects were completed:

- The new Sunset Community Centre was opened to the public at year end, replacing one of the oldest facilities in the City.
- Extensive plaza renovations were completed and officially opened at the top of Queen Elizabeth Park including the Celebration Pavilion, fountains, sculpture and Tai Chi arbours.
- The new Air India Memorial was unveiled in Stanley Park; the project, funded by the Federal Government, included a major refurbishment of the children's playground at Ceperley Meadow.
- Two small greenspaces were added to the Vancouver park inventory: in Yaletown at Mainland and Nelson, and in Marpole at 72<sup>nd</sup> & Osler.

- East Vancouver's redeveloped Pandora Park was officially opened with new walkways, seating, play areas and drainage.
- Neighborhood park upgrades significantly improved Nelson and Victoria Parks, and the Oak & 37<sup>th</sup> park site.
- The Lost Lagoon bicycle path was reconstructed to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety in Stanley Park.
- Nearly 1 km of new linear recreation walkways was completed at Southeast False Creek (waterfront seawall) and Carrall Street greenway (first block).
- Playgrounds were renovated or replaced in George, Bobolink, Victoria, and Rupert Parks to better serve families; new playgrounds were added to the overall inventory at Coopers' Park Extension, Nelson, Stanley and 72<sup>nd</sup> & Osler Parks.

#### Special Project: Stanley Park Restoration

The restoration of iconic Stanley Park was one of the year's signature renewal projects. The devastating wind storms of late 2006 leveled more than 100 acres and 10,000 trees in Vancouver's first and largest park. The Park Board responded quickly with a redirection of resources to address the multifaceted work to plan, then carry out, the complex recovery process. The project required a continuous balancing of park access and business operations with public safety and environmental concerns.

Following the approval of the Restoration Plan in the Spring, significant progress was made with the park well on its way to being cleaned up and renewed by year end. With the help of biologists, archaeologists, engineers, environmentalists and forest specialists, coupled with support from governments, corporations, individuals and the media, the following restoration work was completed:

- Clearing blowdown areas
- Protecting environmentally sensitive areas
- Reopening roads and trails
- Removing hazardous trees
- Assessing and mapping the park
- Thinning trees to protect them from future storms
- Stabilizing the damaged cliffs and slopes
- Reopening the seawall
- Replanting the forest

Other initiatives to meet future recreation challenges:

- A 25-year lease was approved for the Stadium in Nat Bailey Park, including a \$5 million restoration of the historic baseball facility
- Ongoing retention of the Downtown Skate Plaza was approved, following a 2-year trial for the street style skate board park



### ***Performance Measures***

*Capital funds are used to acquire, construct, maintain and renew the large, diverse and, in some cases, ageing system of buildings and open spaces.*

#### *Capital Budget Spending*

*2005 - \$21 million*

*2006 - \$17 million*

*2007 - \$22 million*

*Financial contributions from community groups and governments allow the Park Board to do more with less taxpayer funding.*

#### *Capital Donations*

*2005 - \$281,000*

*2006 - \$1.4 million*

*2007 - \$1 million*

#### *Infrastructure Grants*

*2005 - \$2.2 million*

*2006 - 1.5 million*

*2007 - \$0.7 million*

*Planned upgrading of buildings and greenspace helps the Park Board accommodate the demands of a growing city.*

#### *New/Renewed Facilities Opened (# and size)*

*2005 - 3 (9,192 square metres)*

*2006 - 3 (4,268 square metres)*

*2007 - 1 (2,890 square metres)*

#### *New/Renewed Parks Opened (# and size)*

*2005 - 4 (3.15 hectares)*

*2006 - 3(8.88 hectares)*

*2007 - 5 (9.30 hectares)*

#### *New/Renewed Playgrounds out of total*

*2005 - 6/150*

*2006 - 11/151*

*2007 - 8/155*

## **Olympic Legacy Planning**

*“Maximize opportunities around the 2010 Winter Games...”*

There will be unique opportunities out of the City’s involvement in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Tangible legacies include new recreation facilities, increased tourism and a body of trained volunteers; intangible legacies include a chance to foster civic pride and a greater sense of community.

With great anticipation and following extensive consultation, planning and design work, 2007 was the year when the Park Board ‘put the shovel in the ground’ at all three Olympic Legacy projects – Hillcrest Curling Venue/Percy Norman Pool, and Killarney and Trout Lake Ice Rinks. These projects, which will result in more than \$100 million of new recreation facilities for residents, were kept on-track throughout the year with the Park Board working closely with VANOC, the City and other partners to resolve funding challenges and to meet construction deadlines.

The Park Board participated in the second year of Olympic countdown celebrations, with groundbreaking ceremonies at the Hillcrest venue taking place in March; by year end significant progress was made on the competition curling and wheel chair curling facility (approximately 20% complete). Construction of the Killarney and Trout Lake rinks began for use during the Games as practice facilities for figure skating and short track speed skating.

Use of Yaletown’s David Lam Park was approved as an Olympic Live Site, offering free public access to 2010 events and ceremonies.

Consultations also began with key stakeholders and partners starting with Community Associations on ways to engage residents and neighborhoods in local events and activities leading up to and during the 2010 Winter Games – to build excitement and a sense of community.

The Park Board also participated in the City’s ‘Measuring Up’ project, assessing how to make communities more accessible and inclusive for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

## **Sustainability**

*“Develop policies and practices to achieve environmental objectives...”*

The Park Board’s commitment to sustainability and environmental leadership continued through a variety of conservation measures, alternative energies and technologies, advocacy for more natural landscapes and promotion of urban ecology.

- High environmental performance standards (LEED Gold level) were part of the ‘green building’ designs of the Hillcrest Park curling venue and legacy facility (underway), Killarney and Trout Lake ice rinks (underway), the new Sunset Community Centre (completed) and #1 Kingsway civic centre project (underway). The new community centre at Southeast False Creek is planned for LEED Platinum.
- In partnership with community partners and volunteers, the Park Board marked Earth Day in Everett Crowley, Jericho and Hastings Parks by way of tree plantings and other celebrations.
- A shoreline protection project was completed at New Brighton Park to control major erosion; featured were native plantings, new benches and pathways.
- A ParkPartners event was held with stewardship groups to revitalize the program; new web-based tracking tools were piloted for community projects.

The Board continued to pursue a more sustainable approach to doing business:

- A strategy and funding were approved to reduced Green House Gas (GHG) emissions at Park Board facilities 20% by 2010 as part of the City’s Corporate Climate Change Action Plan. Under this initiative, a number of energy efficiency projects were completed by year end to meet the goals for a greener future.
  - Gym lighting at the Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre was changed to fluorescent, providing faster turn on and lowering electrical consumption.
  - A heat recovery system was installed in Templeton Pool’s ventilation system, taking heat from the hot air being exhausted from the building and using it to warm up fresh air.
  - UV lighting was installed in Kensington Community Centre’s hot tub/whirlpool to aid in disinfecting the water, significantly improving air quality and reducing maintenance.
  - Eleven field irrigation systems were converted to radio control.
  - To conserve water, dual flush flushometers were installed at four sites; metering basin faucets, sensed faucets, flush valves, metering showers and low flow plumbing fixtures were installed across Park Board facilities.
  - LED lights were installed at Lost Lagoon Fountain’s popular seasonal display, providing longer life and greatly reduced consumption levels.
- The practice to purchase sustainable seafood at Park Board operations was approved.
- Following a pilot program, a waste reduction program was put in place at concessions using biodegradable, compostable food containers.
- Other ethical and sustainable initiatives continuing at Park Board offices and facilities helped to collectively reduce impact on the environment:
  - Green certified cleaning products and biodegradable garbage bags
  - Recycled multi-purpose copying machines
  - Energy efficiency requirements of courier service contractor
  - Ethically sourced sports and other staff clothing
  - Energy star appliances
  - Certified fair trade coffee, sugar packets and chocolate bars

- Printing of standard white envelopes on 100% recycled material, certified by Forest Stewardship Council
- Network stations certified by Enviro-Choice, and made from 100% recycled or renewable materials.

### ***Performance Measures***

*The Park Board's annual food supply tender includes items covered by the Ethical Purchasing Policy and Supplier Code of Conduct.*

*Fair trade products purchased:*

- 2005 - Coffee 38,136 packets, Sugar 190,000 packets*
- 2006 - Coffee 35,860 packets, Sugar 245,000 packets*
- 2007 - Coffee 38,360 packets, Sugar 208,000 packets*

*Park Board environmental programs are achieving results:*

*Cumulative reduction in water from conversion of irrigation to central control*

- 2006 - 18 million gallons (30%)*
- 2007 - 22.5 million gallons (30%)*

*Reduction in energy use from new lighting at Roundhouse*

- 2007 - 3 tonnes of GHG*

*Reduction in energy use from Templeton Pool's ventilation*

- 2007 - 40% fewer GHG emissions*

### **The Arts**

***“Make arts and culture an important part of every day life...”***

The arts provide opportunities for people to share experiences and cultures, learn new skills and create community connections.

Public art remained a key part of the Park Board's promotion of the arts.

- More than a dozen community projects were funded under the Neighborhood Matching Fund.
- Artists-in-Residence were selected for six month residencies at Mount Pleasant and Britannia Community Centres.
- Three artist teams were selected to participate in Stanley Park's environmental art project.
- Biennale's inaugural exhibition of sculptures in parks and on beaches was enjoyed by residents and visitors.

The Park Board welcomed the diversity of Vancouver's citizenry:

- A pilot program, Play it Right, was developed as part of a national initiative and phased in to day camps to raise awareness of child rights, multi-culturalism and challenges to children who speak, play, look and behave differently due to race and culture.

- The Park Board partnered with Vancouver Coastal Health and UBC School of Nursing to document health effects of seniors working regularly with professional community-based artists.
- A number of seniors art project were developed such as Lines of Life, Chance to Dance, Active Communities Art Walk and Tea Dance.

### **Development of Internal Resources**

*“Recognize that staff is the greatest resource...”*

The Park Board strives to build an organization that supports creativity, continual learning and innovative ideas.

In 2007, a number of initiatives helped to improve the quality of work for employees:

- Technical, professional development and other job-related training opportunities were provided for staff. A range of courses were taken by front line workers and management through the ‘City Learn’ program, in-service sessions, and other workshops, conferences and seminars.
- Half-day employee orientations were provided for 32 new employees to share the Park Board’s vision and values. Sessions included history, current issues, and employee roles and responsibilities.
- The Occupational Health and Safety program continued to contribute to the reduction of injuries to staff and corresponding lost time: in the last seven years, significant gains have been made to provide a safer, healthier workplace.

### ***Performance Measures***

*Total # of external training courses taken by Park Board staff*

2005 - 556

2006 - 479

2007 - 326

*Health and safety training courses conducted*

2006 - 18 (1,350 attendees)

2007 - 19 (422 attendees)

*Reduction in lost time injuries*

since 2006 - 19%

### **Awards**

*“Strive for leadership, excellence and innovation...”*

The Park Board received a number of awards:

- Project Evergreen Canada Stewardship Award for VanDusen Botanical Garden, recognizing their exemplary work and noting a passion for greenspaces with concerns about the environment, economic and lifestyle benefits of greenspaces and the effect of the community around the garden.
- City of Vancouver Heritage Award of Merit for Coal Harbour Balustrade restoration, bestowed for continued maintenance and restoration of the historic balustrade by employing exemplary conservation theory and practice.
- Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia Award of Merit for Killarney Leisure Pool, recognized for design features such as the sweeping north wall of windows overlooking the park and mountains.
- Leisure Business Magazine Facilities of Merit Award for Killarney Leisure Pool, honouring the state-of-the-art recreation facility for its function, design, integration and value for money.

## **SUMMARY**

The Park Board persevered and moved forward through the wide impacts of the storm and strike as well as other major challenges in 2007, demonstrating the skill and flexibility of staff as well as the leadership and vision of the Board. The year's many accomplishments would not have been possible without the contributions of numerous partners and stakeholders, hard work and commitment of employees and involvement of the public.

In 2008, the Park Board will continue to enrich the lives of Vancouver's residents through such exciting projects as: completion of the Stanley Park restoration and celebration of the park's 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; official opening of the new Sunset Community Centre; opening of the new Mount Pleasant Community Centre at the #1 Kingsway civic complex; unveiling of redevelopments at Nelson Park and 37<sup>th</sup> & Oak park site; the start of construction to renew VanDusen Botanical Garden; completion of the Hillcrest curling venue; and a new bistro to replace the ageing concession stand at English Bay.

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