



Date: February 12, 2013

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Feasibility Study for An Accessible Sailing Dock at the Jericho Sailing Centre

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Board permit the Disabled Sailing Association of BC (DSA) to undertake a feasibility study for an Accessible Floating Dock at the Jericho Sailing Centre, in Jericho Beach Park, with input and advice from staff; and**
- B. That staff report back to the Board on the findings of this study and possible next steps.**

POLICY

The Board has jurisdiction and control over parklands including the approval of parkland improvements.

The Park Board Strategic Plan includes a strategic objective to provide for improved inclusivity and accessibility in parks and recreation facilities and services. This study relates directly to these objectives.

BACKGROUND

The Jericho Sailing Centre Association (JSA) is a non-profit organization that operates at Jericho Beach Park through a long standing agreement with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. The JSA provides recreational boating opportunities at the Jericho Sailing Center in Jericho Beach Park, including programs and access for disabled sailors through the Disabled Sailing Association of BC.

Disabled Sailing started in North America in Vancouver at the Jericho Sailing Centre, in 1987, through the efforts of Sam Sullivan, who soon after founded the Disabled Sailing Association of BC (DSA).

Since then, the activity has spread across Canada (including three additional disabled sailing outlets in British Columbia in Victoria, Kelowna and Ladysmith/Chemainus), the United States, and around the world. By 1996, Disabled Sailing was a demonstration sport at the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Atlanta. By 2000, in Sydney, it became a full-fledged part of the Paralympics.

And while the sport started at Jericho, the Vancouver operation remains one of the few (we actually know of no others) operating without an “Accessible Floating Dock.” This means all sails in Vancouver – between 800 and 1,000 every summer – require boats to be manually winched in and out of the water, in all sea and weather conditions.

At present, clients (sailors) are transferred in and out of wheelchairs, by hoist, directly under “The Galley” restaurant in full public view. The DSA is growing and needs improved and dignified facilities to support this sport.

For these reasons, the DSA wishes to undertake a feasibility study to confirm possible locations, costs, and conceptual designs for an Accessible Floating Dock at the Jericho Sailing Centre. This proposal is supported by the JSA as an Accessible Floating Dock will benefit all recreational boaters.

The study is to be fully funded by the DSA.

The Park Board recently removed the Jericho Marginal Wharf, located east of the Jericho Sailing Centre, to restore the beach and to create foreshore and upland wildlife habitats. This area shall not be impacted by this study.

To the west of the Jericho Sailing Centre is the Park Board owned and operated Jericho Pier, which is a popular destination for fishing and gathering. This pier will be upgraded and repaired in 2013 and has the potential in the long term to include the Accessible Floating Dock. It will be considered in this study.

A map that indicates the location of the proposed study area at the Jericho Sailing Centre in Jericho Beach Park, the proposed study area, and the location of the Jericho Pier and the beach restoration project, is attached as Appendix A to this report.

DISCUSSION

For DSA, an Accessible Floating Dock will greatly facilitate the demand that currently exists. A minimum increase in program capacity of 50% would be expected, without additional capital cost (simply using the current fleet of eight Martin 16 sailboats) and the demand there. A new dock facility at Jericho would greatly reduce time lost retrieving and launching boats and sailing time lost due to low tides.

An Accessible Floating Dock would also:

- Provide greatly enhanced safety and comfort for sailors, volunteers, staff and other users of the waters adjacent to the Jericho Sailing Centre.
- Restore dignity and privacy for sailors with disabilities. Hoyer Lifts would be mounted into the new dock facility so that transfers in and out of wheelchairs would occur on the dock and out of the public domain.
- Greatly reduce operating costs including repairs and maintenance for DSA.

For the City of Vancouver, an Accessible Floating Dock, if designed for public access, could provide an accessible viewpoint unrivalled on the Vancouver waterfront. The dock would not be the sole domain of the DSA, but would be available for others groups and organizations (such as kayakers) thereby increasing overall capacity at the Jericho Sailing Centre.

The study will be undertaken by an independent and experienced marine structural engineer familiar with marina design and construction, Burrard Inlet coastal processes, and Provincial and Federal environmental fish and shellfish habitat protection requirements.

SUMMARY

The DSA proposal to retain a consultant to undertake a feasibility study for an Accessible Floating Dock at the Jericho Sailing Centre, in Jericho Beach Park, is in keeping with the Park Board's strategic objective of improving accessibility and inclusivity in parks and recreation.

The costs for this study are to be borne by the DSA, the proposal is supported by the JSA, and staff will work collaboratively with the DSA and its consultants during the study. Staff will also bring a follow up report on the findings of the study and possible next steps for an Accessible Floating Dock at the Jericho Sailing Centre, to the Board for consideration when the study is complete.

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Study Area for an Accessible Floating Dock at Jericho Beach Park

