



Date: May 15, 2015

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
FROM: General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
SUBJECT: "Home and Away" Public Art - Empire Fields

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## RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the installation of the sculpture "Home and Away", which celebrates both historic and future activities at Empire Fields and which was commissioned by the Public Art Program and designed for Empire Fields/Plateau Park; with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

## POLICY

The Vancouver Park Board's Arts Policy states:

*The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation confirms its mandate in the arts and recognizes the arts as an essential element in a vital, creative and balanced city...(and)...The Board provides a vibrant public realm and supports the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.*

## BACKGROUND

In December 2010, City Council adopted the Hastings Park/PNE Master Plan which sets forth the vision for the renewal of Hastings Park and the PNE. The Plan guides capital investments needed to align with the overall vision of the site as a multi-purpose destination for economic development, culture and entertainment, and as a park and public gathering space for both the local community and residents across the city and the region.

The redevelopment of Empire Fields/Plateau Park was identified as a priority project to achieve the greening, sports and recreation goals of the master plan and was funded in the 2012 - 14 Capital Plan. In February 2012, the Hastings Park/PNE Master Planning team (then a part of Cultural Services department) worked with Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg Landscape Architects and City Public Art staff to identify an opportunity for a professional artist to be included in the design team for the Empire Fields/Plateau Park site. This was done to ensure a collaborative design process which would result in a unique and integrated art piece within the final park design. This is consistent with standard commissioning processes used by the City's Public Art Program.

An artist selection process was undertaken with input from the Hastings Park planning team and the landscape architects. Lead Pencil Studio was selected and began working with the design team in April 2012. The team took inspiration from ideas of way-finding, play features and seating. A unique artwork was developed, a "slice" of play architecture that references the historic structures such as the colossal ski run in the 1950s and the bleachers at the Empire Stadium. The artwork named "Home and Away", will provide seating for viewing activities on the field and may include a playful slide exit back into the park.



In January 2014, the Public Art Program allocated partial funds for the \$450,000 artwork; the remainder of the funds are included in the 2015-2018 capital plan.

After review with staff and the landscape designers in 2014, the final location for the art piece was confirmed. The structure provides seating for a minimum 150 people with a panoramic view over the entire park. The artists are scheduled to undertake the detailed design of the work in spring of 2015.

## DISCUSSION

The City Public Art Program is responsible for commissioning works of public art. Park Board Planning and Arts and Culture staff provide Board priorities and opportunities for public art commissions on park land and buildings for this purpose.

The Board's standard processes for review of public art include:

1. Technical and risk management reviews of site, structure, installation conducted by staff teams,
2. Aesthetic review by the Public Art Committee, and
3. Community consultation regarding current site usage scaled to size and location of park.

"Home and Away" has met these steps in the process as follows:

1. Technical and risk management reviews:
  - a. June-October 2014: Hastings Park Project Management team worked with the artists and landscape architects to review sites in light of developments at the park;
  - b. Risk Management reviewed concept and provided input in regard to contracting;
  - c. Public Art staff have committed to a full risk management review as part of detailed design phase. Review to include Parks Development staff;
  - d. Technical approvals will be obtained, including the archaeological standards as needed. All issues will be resolved before fabrication begins.

2. Aesthetic review:

- a. June 2012: Staff and design team supported the artist's "Home and Away concept";
- b. June 2012 and again in June 2014: Art concept presented to the Public Art Committee. The Committee was supportive and enthusiastic.

3. Community engagement:

- a. 2011: The intent to incorporate public art was referred to in the high level Hastings Park Master Plan and included in public presentations;
- b. April 2012: The artists participated in sessions with stakeholder groups to consider the program, histories and key associations for the site;
- c. Community engagement will also include:
  - i.
    - i.* Display panels and have staff available to provide information
    - ii.* Respond to questions at the opening of the Empire Fields and Plateau Park on July 18
    - iii.* Explanatory site signage prior to and during installation
    - iv.* An information update to the Empire Fields/Plateau Park Design Advisory Group (that provided input on the park design process)
    - v.* Local residents engaged via social media and notices.

The goal is to complete the installation the artwork in late 2015 or early 2016.

**SUMMARY**

This proposal meets the Board's goals for public art in parks and is fully funded by the Public Art Program. Home and Away was inspired by a significant piece of Vancouver's sport and recreation history and will be a striking and engaging addition to the diverse active recreation features at Empire Fields and Plateau Park. Staff recommend that the Board accept the art proposal with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

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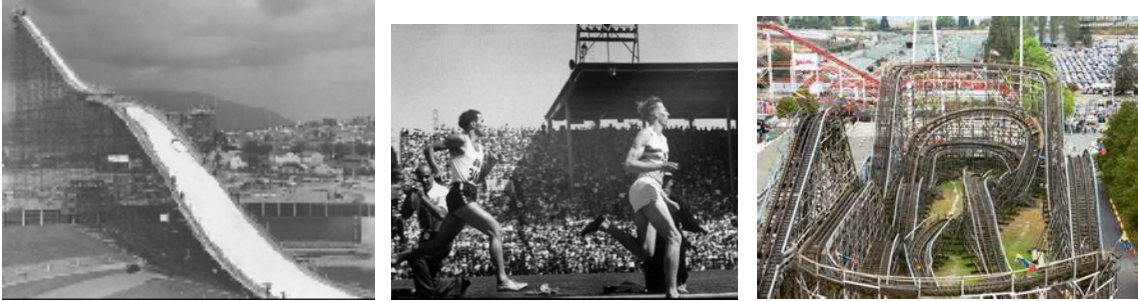
Appendix 1 - Proposed Artwork  
Appendix 2 - Proposed Site maps

## APPENDIX 1: Proposed Sculpture Installation for Empire Fields/ Plateau Park

### *HOME AND AWAY*

Artist: Lead Pencil Studio

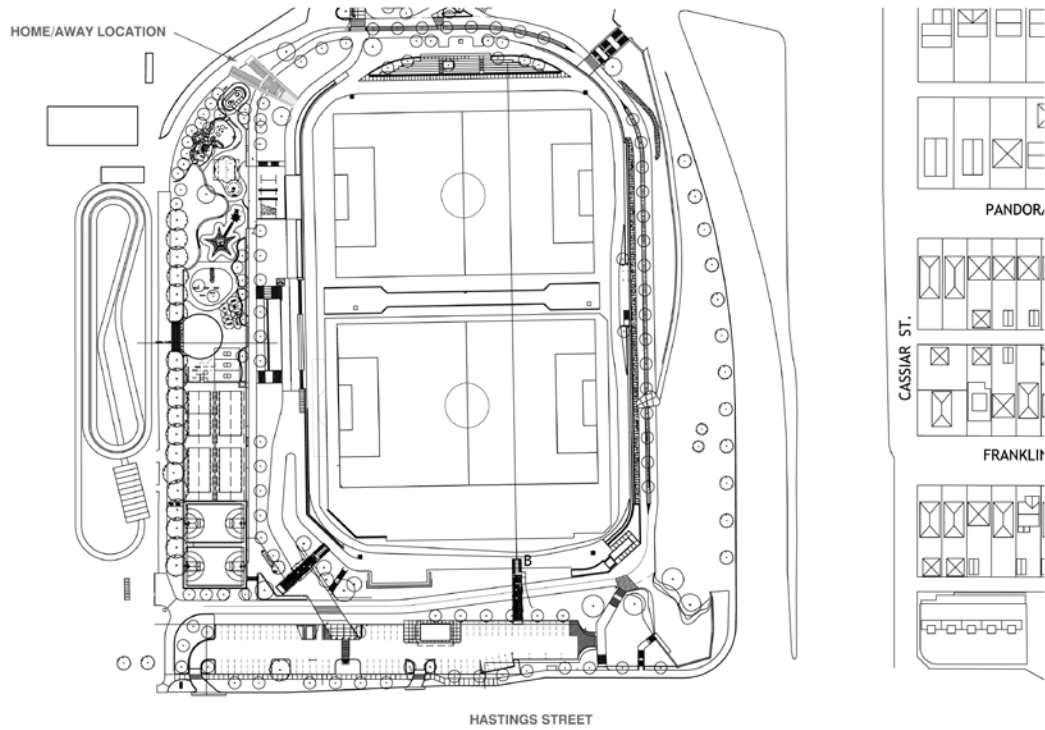
*Home and Away* is a sculptural artwork that builds on the historic structures for which Hastings Park is known - a magnificent constructed ski run that once graced the site in the 1950s, the Empire Stadium (1954-1993) and the locally famous early twentieth century wooden roller coaster that is still the highlight of Playland.



*Home and Away* is a "slice" of play architecture that references the old bleachers and score boards. The 14.63m high x 10.67m wide x 29.57m long structure provides seating for a minimum 150 people and may include a playful slide exit across the pathway. The piece is located at NW corner of the park where it will be visible from Hastings Street.



## APPENDIX 2: Proposed Sculpture Site at Empire Fields/ Plateau Park



### Location detail:

