



October 14, 2016

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: TGVI Annual Report & Corporate Sponsorship Fund Request

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board contribute \$50,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to support the staffing of two part-time recreation positions in 2017 to complete the implementation of recommendations from the report “Building a Path to Parks and Recreation for All.”

POLICY

The Vancouver Park Board’s policy on the approved use of Corporate Sponsorship funds contains the following criteria:

- To fund one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will support revenue-generating activities and the money repaid into the Corporate Sponsorship Account from the increased revenues within a period of three years.
- To fund initiatives with one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will result in improved efficiencies.
- To fund one-time expenditures over and above the existing funding level in the operating budget which are beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system.
- All expenditures require Board approval.

BACKGROUND

The Park Board has identified "inclusion and accessibility" as a priority objective for parks and recreation services in the current Strategic Plan.

On May 13, 2013, the Park Board established the Trans* and Gender Variant Inclusion (TGVI) Working Group to assist the organization with identifying barriers citizens face in accessing parks and recreation services. This effort was led by a dedicated group of volunteers who planned and implemented a thorough community engagement process over a period of nearly one year. Through a variety of forums, opportunities to offer feedback and first-hand experiences were provided to trans* and gender variant residents, City of Vancouver and Park Board staff, service agencies, community organizations, and volunteers.

On April 28 2014, the Park Board received the report entitled “Building a Path to Parks & Recreation for All” prepared by the TGVI Working Group and directed staff to create a new Trans* and Gender Variant Implementation Steering Committee to assist staff with the implementation of actions recommended in the report. Park Board also directed staff to provide a status update on the progress of the implementation process and key outcomes.

On June 22, 2015, the Park Board appointed eight community members to the TGVI Steering Committee. The Park Board received updates on the two pilot projects, the Trans* Inclusive Public Swim and the pilot washroom signage, on July 6, 2015.

On July 11, 2016, the Park Board appointed two community members, for a term of one year ending June 30, 2017, to fill vacancies on the TGVI Steering Committee.

DISCUSSION

The TGVI Steering Committee has received feedback from Trans* Inclusive Public Swim participants and staff at Templeton Park Pool and Hillcrest Centre on the implementation of pilot programs, signage, staff training, and public communications.

Trans* Inclusive Public Swim

The pilot Trans* Inclusive Public Swim began January 11, 2015, with two additional hours (noon-2pm) added to Sunday public swims at Templeton Park Pool. Over time, the swim has grown as a public swim with an increase in cisgender swimmers, while the trans* community has expressed a sense of being outnumbered.

On September 11, 2016, the Trans* Inclusive Public Swim was rebranded as the Trans* Swim and designated as a “time for the sole use of patrons who identify as trans, gender variant, two-spirit, and their family and friends.” Templeton Park Pool is now a location where individuals in the trans* community can become comfortable with public facilities and their operations before moving into the larger context of public programming.

The swim program has shifted from an equality model where the same resources are provided for all to an equity model with a focus on specific populations most vulnerable to health inequities.

Signage/ Priority Facilities

Feedback from the trans* and gender variant community, public, and staff has been overwhelmingly positive about the pilot washroom and change room signs. Changing spaces from “Family” to “Universal” has reduced conflicts between families and single individuals seeking greater privacy than what gendered spaces provide.

The TGVI Steering Committee community members worked with the City of Vancouver’s Real Estate & Facilities Management (REFM) department and the City of Vancouver LGBTQ2+ Advisory committee to develop consistent design guidelines for washroom and change room signs. Gendered icons will be replaced by text (Men, Women or Universal) and functional icons will highlight what is available in the space (toilet, shower, change table, accessible space). The phrase “Trans People Welcome” is included on each sign in a slightly larger font than current Park Board signage and placed as a single line above the sign’s bottom edge.

The TGVI Steering Committee will also be working with REFM in 2016/2017 to develop a list of priority recreation facilities most frequented by the trans* community. The list will guide staff on where to install cubicles in gendered spaces and, if possible, create universal change spaces with cubicles.

Staff Training

Staff training was focussed on pilot facilities and aquatics staff. All aquatics staff have participated in the Trans* and Gender Variant inclusion orientation. A refresher will be launched in 2017, two years after the initial training.

Staff at the two pilot locations, Templeton Park Pool and Hillcrest Centre, and staff at Hastings, West End, and Coal Harbour Community Centres, as well as at Barclay Manor, have received training.

Scaling training to include all recreation staff is a challenge. The most impactful element is the interaction between staff and members of the trans* and gender variant community. Hearing their stories and learning of the challenges encountered when accessing a recreation facility transforms “trans* and gender variant inclusion” from an abstract policy to real life experiences. The volunteer community members are willing to present when able, but it is not possible to schedule them for every facility.

It is requested that Park Board hire, for the period of one year, two part-time staff from the TGVI community to lead system-wide training and share their personal challenges when accessing recreation facilities. Their primary tasks will be to:

1. Develop a scalable training system that will reach all Recreation staff and is capable of being refreshed bi-annually.
2. Develop a trans* and gender variant community engagement system to improve direct communications between community members and Park Board staff.
3. Develop a richer media experience for the public who wish to learn more about the trans* and gender variant community, through the sharing of individual experiences on Vancouver.ca/TGVI.

Community Outreach

Since 2014, the Park Board has been dependent upon the personal networks of the Working Group and Steering Committee members. The goal for 2016/2017 is to develop a community engagement system with the assistance of the two part-time staff noted above.

Instead of community input being mediated through the TGVI Steering Committee community members, staff are to create a system allowing for direct communications between the trans* and gender variant community and the Park Board.

Public Outreach

TGVI Steering Committee community members, the public and staff have commented that the Vancouver.ca/TGVI website does not provide sufficient information to assist the public in understanding the human stories and the new vocabulary of trans* and gender variant inclusion.

The goal for 2016/2017 is to develop richer media, be it audio or video, with individuals telling their stories and relating the challenges they encounter to the public. A glossary of terms would be added to aid the public and staff from other cities in learning the vocabulary of trans* and gender variant inclusion.

The Coordinator of Access and Volunteer Services would lead the process in partnership with the TGVI Steering Committee and direct the two part-time staff in identifying individuals who would wish to participate.

SUMMARY

Staff recommend the Park Board approve the one-time contribution of \$50,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to support the staffing of two part-time recreation positions in 2017 to complete the implementation of the recommendations contained in the “Building a Path to Parks and Recreation for All” report.

As directed by the Board, staff will provide an annual status update in 2017 on the implementation and outcomes. Staff anticipate that the addition of two part-time staff will build on previous work resulting in meaningful progress toward the Park Board’s vision to be leaders in parks and recreation.

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