



April 10, 2018

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Park Board Reconciliation Strategies - TRC Update

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board receive for information the Reconciliation Strategies update on the 2016/17 achievements and 2018 action plans; and
- B. THAT the Park Board endorse the proposed Mission, Vision, and Values to guide and support the implementation of the Reconciliation Strategies and goals outlined in this report.

BOARD AUTHORITY

As per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over park land use in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within designated parks.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on January 11, 2016, the [Park Board adopted eleven reconciliation strategies](#) in response to the Calls to Action provided by the Truth and Reconciliation of Commission of Canada (TRC). This motion set the Park Board on a new path forward in Reconciliation. The beginning of this path, embarked upon with good and open hearts, has provided important insights about social inequities. These insights allow us to refine our long term goals to ensure Reconciliation is authentic and meaningful.

The adopted strategies provided an initial framework for moving forward with Reconciliation, and have led to many initiatives exploring a new relationship with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations specifically, as well as with the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples in Vancouver. Many projects and initiatives have resulted from these eleven strategies, and through their implementation processes staff have learned an enormous amount about the priorities and principles of Reconciliation.

While the strategies address a specific set of issues and tactics to implement the theme of Reconciliation in Park Board processes and projects, Park Board staff are now looking to deepen and embed the Reconciliation principles learned throughout the process of implementing the eleven strategies.

DISCUSSION

This report summarizes the actions undertaken and successes achieved in 2016/17 since the adoption of the eleven Reconciliation Strategies and outlines proposed 2018 plans. In addition, this report is recommending the Board endorse a focused Mission, Vision, and Values

statement that articulates an overarching, clear set of goals and values to ensure Reconciliation is carried out authentically and effectively across the organization. This Mission, Vision, and Values statement has emerged through the learnings since early 2016, and will guide the future growth and evolution of Reconciliation within the Park Board.

RECONCILIATION STRATEGIES

Following is an outline of the specific achievements in 2016/17 for each of the eleven strategies and the plan forward for 2018.

A. Adopt the “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” as a reference framework for Park Board’s Reconciliation initiatives.

2016/17 Achievements:

- Distilled list of principles and guidelines.

2018 Action Plan:

- Applying principles and guidelines to Park Board business.

B. Work with First Nations peoples and other civic bodies to identify, create, and deliver appropriate and actionable staff training on indigenous issues and reconciliation

2016/17 Achievements:

- Brad Marsden and/or Bob Joseph sessions: 400 Park Board staff trained in 2017, including a workshop for the Park Board Commissioners with Brad Marsden; to date, 715 staff have received Cultural Competency training - this number will continue to grow with regularly scheduled training;
- Archaeological chance find training for Park Operations staff: 224 staff trained in 2017 -- this number will continue to grow with regularly scheduled training.

2018 Action Plan:

- NEW: Locally-focused training to complement the other 3 modules in helping staff to understand working in “Unceded Territory”. Contract in development to design and test training modules in 2018.

C. Take a 360° approach to programming, including in the areas of culture, health, public dialogue, physical activity, and sport in order to increase public knowledge and awareness of reconciliation and to provide support to indigenous peoples including children, youth, Elders and families.

2016/17 Achievements:

- 150+ Walks;
- Reframing Relations;
- Adding reconciliation deliverables to all Recreation Programmers’ work plans.

2018 Action Plan:

- Consider implications of lessons learned:
 - Asking Aboriginal staff to Indigenize content without ensuring adequate support and training for project-adjacent staff can be an undue emotional burden on the Aboriginal staff member(s); we increase the risk of losing valuable expertise;
 - Standard measures for project success must be re-evaluated; in reconciliation work, beginning a dialogue can be uncomfortable and not always feel productive; this doesn't mean it's not worth doing;
 - It's ineffective to ask people to deliver on reconciliation without defining what that means, or providing adequate support, guidance, and cultural competency from the top on down; the results leave us vulnerable to missteps that can harm our relations with Aboriginal groups;
- For 2018 and beyond, the Park Board Reconciliation Team will work with the Director of Recreation and/or appropriate senior-level staff to identify opportunities for public education around Reconciliation, and to determine what cultural and resource supports are needed.

D. Continue Park Board's precedent-setting intergovernmental approach to the future stewardship of Stanley Park and other relevant lands.

2016/17 Achievements:

- Ongoing Stanley Park plan work (separate update to be provided);
- Ongoing Northeast False Creek Park work (separate update to be provided);
- Jericho/Locarno strategy is being addressed both inter-departmentally and inter-governmentally with the City of Vancouver and the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations;
- City-wide cultural matters are being addressed through an intergovernmental working group comprised of staff members from Park Board and the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations;
- Granddaughter's Mural – after an unfortunate series of events that caused distress and anger among the artists involved, the Park Board sought the advice of staff members from Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh; the ensuing recommendation to display some of the panels from the mural in Stanley Park and to return some of the panels to the artists for display in their communities was well-received by the artists and the Stanley Park Ecology Society; a valuable lesson coming out of this situation is that the Park Board must contextualize artistic works such that their honesty and challenge is well-supported for encouraging dialogue.

2018 Action Plan:

- Stanley Park Intergovernmental Working Group to continue;
- Cultural Heritage Committee with MST to continue;
- Jericho/Locarno strategy to continue.

E. Review the donation of monuments, memorials, and public art processes and policies to ensure integration of Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices.

2016/17 Achievements:

- Plaque review;
 - A pre-existing inventory of plaques in public parks and community spaces is being reviewed and catalogued to determine the de facto historical narrative the Park Board has been telling in public spaces;
- Consultation with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations on individual projects;
 - Tom Cone (2016) – Proposed location was moved to Charleson Park with approval from the MST Nations;
 - Ireland Canada Monument (2016) – the MST Nations declared no concerns with the placement of the monument in George Wainborn Park

2018 Action Plan:

- Full policy review to be conducted and recommendations made to inform policy update to monuments, memorials, and public art processes.

F. Review archaeological protocols to ensure that “Aboriginal protocols shall be respected before any potentially invasive technical inspection and investigation of a cemetery site” or soil disturbance of a midden site takes place on park lands.

2016/17 Achievements:

- Park board Archeologist hired;
- Updated protocols are in place for park development projects.

2018 Action Plan:

- Ongoing work to support Park Operations and Park Development projects, as well as to other CoV departments.

G. Acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights; that preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.

2016/17 Achievements:

- Principle used to guide Park Naming Policy;
- Principle used to guide Siwash Rock renaming.

2018 Action Plan:

- Principle to be used to guide future naming and recognition projects.

H. Review partner and business contracts, relationships and procurement policies for alignment with TRC Calls to Action.

2016/17 Achievements:

- In 2017, met with City Procurement staff to review overall policy and determine opportunities for integrating reconciliation principles and goals; revised CoV policy has been drafted and is awaiting Council approval;
- Archaeological procurement has now identified pre-qualified archaeological companies that are proven to work well with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations;
- Ongoing education of leaseholders to understand cultural significance of the land to the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

2018 Action Plan:

- Park Board Procurement policy to be updated to align with revised CoV policy and brought to the Board for approval;
- Other partner and business relationships are to be examined so that the Park Board's participation in partner activities aligns with reconciliation goals and the TRC Calls to Action.

I. Establish and fund as a priority a program for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative community-engaged projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation.

2016/17 Achievements:

- A-Frame Artist Residency – Through a collaborative process it was decided that a one year artist residency featuring Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh artists will occur in the A-Frame cabin near Second Beach in Stanley Park (starting in 2018); this residency will see artists using the space as a studio to practice their art and interact with the public in a process aimed at educating and engaging the non-Indigenous population in actively witnessing traditional practice in unceded territory.
- [Truth-Telling Report](#) – In late 2016, Park Board staff began the process to establish the above-mentioned project. In a paradigm-shifting move, staff decided to first consult with Aboriginal artists and cultural leaders to ask how we have been perpetuating colonialism through our previous artistic grant and selection processes. The resulting report is being used as a guiding tool for understanding what it is like for Aboriginal people to work with our organization.

2018 Action Plan:

- The A-Frame artist residency will take place from approximately June 2018 to June 2019.

J. Review event permitting and sports hosting opportunities to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected and that, if appropriate to the scale of the event, that local Indigenous communities are engaged.

2016/17 Achievements:

- Ongoing education of permit-seekers to understand cultural significance of the land to the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations;
- Brockton Oval Cricket Pitch conversion – significant archaeological and cultural concerns were identified through this process; learned that territorial protocols must begin at the early planning stage;
- VanPlay – opportunity was identified for the reconciliation team to ensure reconciliation perspectives and opportunities are embedded throughout the VanPlay process and the resulting Playbook.

2018 Action Plan:

- The reconciliation team will work with Recreation, Special Events, Business Services, and Commercial Operations staff, the local Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and other Aboriginal organizations to determine opportunities for future Aboriginal sports hosting and territorial protocol requirements for events.

K. Maintain current policy of no charge for changing a name on the OneCard, especially in relation to Indigenous people reclaiming names changed by the residential school system.

2016/17 Achievements:

- Policy already in place – no further action required at this time.

RECONCILIATION MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Background

To act as a compass to guide the Park Board's reconciliation journey, staff developed a Mission, Vision, and Values statement. Recognizing the importance of listening to authoritative voices, this statement was written after deeply considering the input received from the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, as well as from other Urban Indigenous engagement touchpoints.

STATEMENT

We believe this journey will enrich us all, and that articulating an inspirational vision with core values to support it helps us all paddle in the same direction.

Mission: Decolonize the Vancouver Park Board.

The Park Board recognizes the institution's colonial history and upholds the Board's commitment to the eleven Reconciliation Strategies.

Vision

For the Park Board to be an evolvable organization in which every employee and Commissioner recognizes the humanity in themselves by recognizing and respecting the humanity of First Peoples; an organization that sets a worldwide example in treating Reconciliation as a decolonization process.

Values

- **Patience:** Colonialism didn't happen overnight. Untangling it takes time. We will pace ourselves for the marathon, not the sprint. We will adjust deadlines to ensure things are done well and respectfully.
- **Clarity:** We will focus on how colonialism functions to exclude, not on how to include.
- **Pragmatism:** All staff are inheriting a system not of our making. The Park Board Reconciliation Team is here to assist colleagues with examining the ways colonialism continues to damage others. Blame is unproductive.
- **Leadership:** We will nurture and sustain each other, demonstrating Indigenous principles in the way we function as a team.
- **Learning:** We consent to learn in public. We will make mistakes. We will sit with those mistakes, be transparent about them, and use them both to learn and to teach. Our mistakes will be diagnostic tools.

Reconciliation Team

In order to support Park Board Staff and Commissioners in this work, the Park Board Reconciliation Team will:

- Uphold and implement the Board's adopted eleven Reconciliation Strategies;
- Apply learned principles in evolving and growing those eleven strategies;
- Identify ongoing colonial practices and systems;
- Work with staff to decolonize processes and create tools to systematize best reconciliation practices; and
- Glean and apply as much as we can from our Indigenous engagement touchpoints to make the best use of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations' and Urban Indigenous groups' time.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will proceed with the Reconciliation Strategies as identified in the 2018 action plans, with ongoing engagement with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and Urban Indigenous groups.

With Board endorsement of the Reconciliation Mission, Vision, and Values, the Park Board Reconciliation team will develop an internal education strategy and provide ongoing support to fellow staff in interpreting the impact of the statement on each department and role.

CONCLUSION

Society is at a critical juncture for reconciliation in Vancouver. Initial work has begun in building relationships with Aboriginal peoples and implementing projects in the spirit of reconciliation. But in order to sustain reconciliation and embed it for future generations, specific work must be undertaken to understand what has been heard from Aboriginal people in this first phase, and to internalize and implement changes that will redefine and deepen the Park Board's own relationship to this city and the unceded land on which it resides.

The next phase takes to heart something heard from our Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh colleagues: important things take time. More than that, they need to take time to ensure they are careful and considered, and to ensure this ongoing journey is undertaken in a good way. Park Board staff and Commissioners are people before all else, and it will require all of us bringing our humanity to the table to make true reconciliation possible.

The eleven Board approved strategies developed in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action provide a solid foundation for the reconciliation work done to date. The new Reconciliation Mission, Vision, and Values statement will allow for a deeper implementation and understanding across the Vancouver Park Board and supports the goal of being a world leader in reconciliation.

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