



July 16, 2018

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Exploring Park Board's Colonial Roots and Current Practices

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation receive and acknowledge the Initial Findings for a Park Board Colonial Audit, attached as Appendix A; and,
- B. THAT the Board direct staff to undertake a comprehensive "Colonial Audit" in order to identify both short term and long term opportunities and specific ways to improve Park Board policies and practices with regard to Reconciliation.

PREVIOUS BOARD DECISIONS

On January 11, 2016, the Park Board approved eleven broad and inclusive [Reconciliation Strategies](#) to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. The first strategy called for the Park Board's adoption of UNDRIP:

Adopt the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" as a reference framework for Park Board's Reconciliation initiatives"

On April 16, 2018, the Park Board endorsed the [Reconciliation Mission, Vision, and Values](#) to guide and support the implementation of the eleven Reconciliation Strategies and related goals. The fifth Value statement relates to "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.

The Park Board also approved the motion titled [Truth and Reconciliation with the Park Board's Colonial Roots](#) on April 16, 2018, which provided the following direction:

...in support of the Vancouver Parks Board's Truth and Reconciliation initiatives, staff undertake an analysis of the Park Board's colonial roots, as well as current practices, and report back with their findings and recommendations to acknowledge any and all injustices uncovered as part of the "truth-telling" phase.

BACKGROUND

In January of 2015, the Park Board met with leaders of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations to discuss embarking on a joint process to develop a long-term comprehensive

plan for Stanley Park. This marked the first time the Board officially acknowledged the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples as rights holders.

In January of 2016, the Park Board approved eleven (11) reconciliation strategies, setting a framework for reconciliation initiatives across departments within the organization. Including broad categories, such as an art fund and recognition of language sovereignty, these strategies led to projects and initiatives that broadened staff's understanding of Indigenous issues.

In April 2018, Park Board received a staff report titled [Truth Telling: Indigenous Perspectives on Working with Municipal Governments](#). The report was a result of a series of consultations led by Park Board staff and Kamala Todd with Aboriginal cultural leaders, artists, and knowledge holders from across Canada, as well as from within the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. In this report, one of the key messages delivered was that in Canada's journey towards "Truth and Reconciliation", the critical step of truth-telling must come first.

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP) outlines certain inalienable rights inherent to Indigenous peoples worldwide, among these rights are the need to "respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources".

The Park Board has, since 2014, officially recognized that the City of Vancouver rests on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Given that the lands the Park Board maintains jurisdiction and control over remain unceded, and that Park Board occupation of this territory and commitment to UNDRIP demand that local Indigenous rights be acknowledged and respected, Park Board's history contains many acts that have contradicted that respect and acknowledgement. In many cases, those acts have contributed to the dispossession, oppression, and erasure of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

The attached report (Appendix A) presents initial findings on the colonial roots of the Vancouver Park Board, and forms the basis for a more fulsome "Colonial Audit". The findings explore several categories of colonial impact on First Nations people, with references to Board decisions made in the first several decades of the Board's operations. The findings also make reference to current practices that are a natural extension of the modus operandi set up by the Park Board's beginnings. The following discussion provides a summary of these initial findings.

DISCUSSION

This report provides some initial findings based off an analysis of the Vancouver Park Board's colonial roots. It provides an overview of the ways in which colonialism has been embedded in the Park Board since its inception in 1888, but does not represent a comprehensive picture. While it provides a basis for moving forward, further work will be required to more fully document long term practices, impacts, and the ways in which colonialism remains woven into the Park Board today: from strategic levels through to day-to-day operations. The identification and prioritization of meaningful actions and recommended direction will only be possible once this more complete audit has been completed.

Initial Findings

While this report is far from comprehensive, it begins to outline a number of the broad colonial impacts, and how they have been embedded at the Park Board throughout its history. These include:

- ***Dispossession***

One of the core acts of colonialism enacted by settlers is the theft of lands and removal of entire communities from their ancestral homes. This core act of colonialism has been undertaken by the Park Board since its inception – beginning with the declaration of jurisdiction over “Stanley Park”, as well as beach areas around the City, that were of both cultural significance, and were home, to local nations. This act of colonialism has, less overtly, continued over time, as all other Park Board run sites throughout Vancouver sit on unceded lands which were previously used and already claimed by the local First Nations.

- ***Archaeology***

Widespread disturbance of archaeological evidence of the local First Nations has been undertaken in Vancouver through urban settler development. The Park Board has been, and continues to be, an agent of the development that impacts archaeological sites. In light of the cultural erasure of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, what remains of the archaeological sites represents the last physical evidence of the millennia of human occupation in this region. As such, the three First Nations have expressed the importance of preserving any and all archaeological sites in Vancouver.

- ***Culture***

Cultural expression in parks is primarily manifested in two visible ways: Activities and Physical Entities. Both of these combine to express who the spaces are designed for and, whether intended or not, communicate who these spaces are not designed for. The nature of the cultural expression in a place can help to explain why certain populations feel unwelcome in public spaces, even if those spaces are declared to be “inclusive”.

The erasure of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh occupation and presence in this territory is accomplished largely through the layering of activities and physical entities on the landscape. Such cultural expressions collectively contribute to a narrative of Vancouver’s history and occupation that excludes the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. The Vancouver Park Board has contributed to this erasure through the building of facilities and infrastructure, permitting and programming of activities and events in public parks and community centres, accepting donations of monuments and memorials on sacred sites, and acts of cultural appropriation.

- ***Prioritizing non-Indigenous Ways of Knowing***

By assuming authority and stewardship over parks and facilities, the Vancouver Park Board is in the position of decision-making based on input from both external and internal authorities. In the case of land stewardship, decisions have been made based on the best available colonial knowledge at the time of the decision. This has led to interventions into ecosystems that have had lasting impact. Throughout this history of decision-making, local Indigenous knowledge of the land has been dismissed or overlooked.

Recent Progress

In 2011, the Park Board and Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations committed to working together on the comprehensive plan for Stanley Park. In that unprecedented step, the Park Board embarked on a process of self-discovery, as staff in the working group began to build working relationships with staff from each of the three Nations. This process has informed the direction of many of the Park Board's Reconciliation initiatives.

Park Board Purpose

Throughout the Park Board's history of decision-making, one overriding sense of purpose pervades. Since its inception, the Board has seen itself as a protector public green space, and a provider of recreation and places of respite for the people.

In these days of rapid population increase, climate change, unabated development, and increased economic disparity, this role is ever more important. Premium places of beauty, replenishment, and natural flora are in reach of the public regardless of economic status.

The hard truth is that throughout the history of the Park Board, society has had a definition of "people" as being those who participate successfully in dominant colonial culture. Occupying unceded territory has left an uncomfortable question of what it means to us, the Park Board, who hold jurisdiction over ancestral, federally and internationally recognized traditional territory of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. How does our commitment to spaces for "the people" sit alongside recognition of Aboriginal rights and title?

Given the increased pressures and risks posed by the environment, economy, population, and politics, it is only prudent to undertake a paradigm shift in how the Park Board views itself as a steward of the land and provider of services to the people. At this critical juncture in time, we must form new relationships with the people of this land, whose history and worldview can mean the difference to this city's resilience. In order to build those relationships, we must first look at the truth of our colonial history, and analyze how to address the specific ways we have impeded our own ability to build those mutually beneficial relationships with local First Nations.

Recommended Next Steps

This report provides an overview of the initial findings of the review of the Park Board's colonial past and current practices. In order to identify and prioritize meaningful actions and direction, a comprehensive Colonial Audit is recommended. This audit will more fully document long term practices, impacts, and the ways in which colonialism is woven into the Park Board: from strategic levels through to day-to-day operations. The identification and prioritization of meaningful actions and direction will only be possible once this more complete audit has been completed.

SUMMARY

The Vancouver Park Board's Initial Findings for a Colonial Audit represents a high-level overview of the broad areas of Park Board colonial impact on Indigenous peoples: specifically the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. Staff recommend completing a

comprehensive Colonial Audit that consists of a more fulsome analysis and scoping of strategies to address all identified areas of colonial impact.

This audit would contribute to the “truth-telling phase” of Truth and Reconciliation, and lead to courses of action that would embed a decolonized perspective into the Park Board’s policies and practices. These revised policies and practices would ultimately contribute to a more resilient and equitable city.

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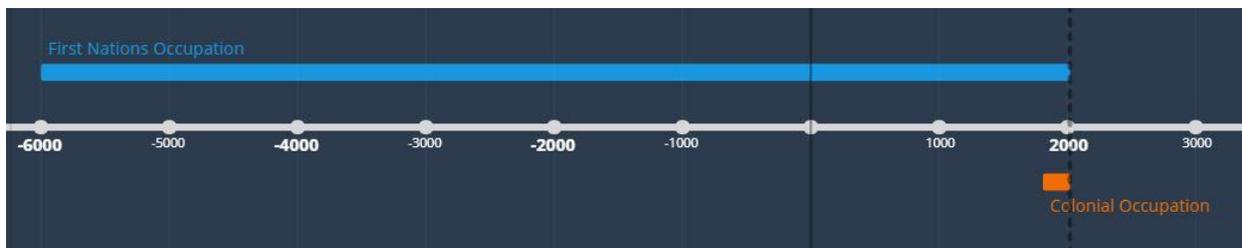
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Colonial Audit: Initial Findings

CONTEXT

Since time immemorial, the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples inhabited this land. Through the course of millennia, they developed complex social, political, and economic systems, and stewarded the land based on a core value of planning for many generations to come.

While interaction between local Indigenous peoples and those from other lands occurred over several centuries, the major colonial impact discussed in this report is the result of settlement of western Europeans beginning in 1791 with the arrival of José María Narváez, followed the next year by Captain George Vancouver.



Approximation of periods of occupation of the Vancouver area

Since the Park Board’s inception in 1888, it has played an active role in the dispossession and erasure of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples from their lands. It has also imposed a narrative on these lands that erases much of the history of people of colour throughout the recent era of foreign settlement in this region. As a result of the lack of First Nations visibility, the general public, Commissioners, and staff have largely been unaware of their impacts on living communities¹ due to this history.

The legacy on which the Park Board operates continues to uphold colonial perspectives, prioritize Western “ways of knowing” and fails to be nimble in adapting itself to new understandings of its history in the broader context of Canadian colonialism.

City of Reconciliation

The City of Vancouver declared itself the City of Reconciliation in 2014. Part of this declaration was the recognition that the City is on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. “Unceded” in this context refers to the lack of any treaties between the Crown and local Indigenous peoples. Neither was the land obtained in the rules of war, or other form of purchase. Thus, the City of Vancouver and the Park Board operate jurisdiction over lands which the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples have Rights and Title over.

Report Purpose

This report provides some initial findings based off an analysis of the Vancouver Park Board’s colonial roots. It provides an overview of the ways in which colonialism has been embedded in the Park Board since its inception in 1888, but does not represent a comprehensive Colonial

¹ Living Communities - First Nations are still present and living within their territories, many on reserve lands.

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Audit. While it provides a basis for moving forward, further work will be required to more fully document long term practices, impacts, and the ways in which colonialism remains woven into the Park Board today: from strategic levels through to day-to-day operations. The identification and prioritization of meaningful actions and recommended direction will only be possible once this more complete audit has been completed.

While this report is far from comprehensive, it begins to outline a number of the broad colonial impacts, and how they have been embedded at the Park Board throughout its history. These include:

- **Dispossession**
 - Removal of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh people from their lands;
- **Archaeology**
 - Disturbance of archaeological sites;
- **Culture**
 - Imposition of its own culture in the form of activities;
 - Imposition of its own culture in the form of installations (monuments, memorials, art, architectural styles, language via signage);
- **Prioritizing non-Indigenous Ways of Knowing**
 - Park Board's approach to stewardship;
 - Education.

This report concludes with an overview of current progress obtained through the Park Board's commitment to developing a long-term Stanley Park comprehensive plan with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh.

INITIAL FINDINGS

Dispossession

One of the core acts of colonialism enacted by settlers² is the theft of lands and removal of entire communities from their ancestral homes. This core act of colonialism has been undertaken by the Park Board since its inception – beginning with the declaration of jurisdiction over “Stanley Park”, as well as beach areas around the City, that were both cultural significance and home to local nations. This act of colonialism has, less overtly, continued over time, as all other Park Board run-sites throughout Vancouver sit on unceded lands which were previously used and already claimed by local First Nations.

² Settler – a person who replaces the laws and epistemologies of the land (vs. immigrant, who is beholden to the laws and epistemologies of the land)

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Following are examples of dispossession by the Park Board:

Stanley Park and the Origin of the Board

In 1888 Vancouver Council created the Park Board to manage Stanley Park. The land itself remains, as it has ever been, unceded. The development of jurisdiction over “Stanley Park” was achieved through a series of political moves and declarations by prominent bureaucrats designed to gloss over the lack of definitive acquisition by the Crown³.

The state of the area known as Stanley Park upon Park Board’s appointment was a collection of villages and shared resources, an ancient and living hub of residences, trade, politics, economy, subsistence, and cultural intermingling.

In 1888, the Park Board requested the Mayor to notify the ‘squatters’ in Stanley Park to remove themselves⁴. Thus began a decades-long effort to cleanse the park of its residents. In 1899 the Board attempted to rid the park of the “Indian buildings at the Narrow in Stanley Park”; in 1909 a fresh campaign was lodged to “get rid of the squatters”, and the final residence was removed in 1952.

Beaches

The Board continued to pursue lands for park use. In 1904, the Board urged Council to furnish funds for acquiring and developing beach property at English Bay, and in 1905 the Board approved a motion requiring the “Jericho Reserve” [possibly səhʌʔqʷ, possibly Jericho and Locarno area lands] for park purposes. Both locations were integral to Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh life, containing village, ceremony, and gathering sites.



English Bay, 1946

³ Barman, Jean. “*Stanley Park’s Secret*”. Harbour Publishing, 2005.

⁴ Source for all early Park Board decisions: “*Notes Taken from Minutes – Board of Park Commissioners*” compiled by P.B. Stroyan in 1948 and retyped in 1962.

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Other Park Board-run sites

Less prominent or well-known are all of the other Park Board-run sites throughout Vancouver, all of which sit on unceded lands that were well-used and already claimed by local First Nations. The common misconception is that village sites were self-contained and the rest of the land was “wild”, when in fact, over the course of millennia, the land on village sites and surrounding areas was cultivated and stewarded, its access and ownership politically and socially negotiated by families of the local First Nations.

Today, Park Board maintains jurisdiction over unceded lands, over which Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh have federally and internationally-recognized Rights and Title.

Archaeology

Widespread disturbance of archaeological evidence of the local First Nations has been undertaken in Vancouver through urban settler development. The Park Board has been, and continues to be, an agent of the development that impacts archaeological sites. In light of the cultural erasure of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, what remains of the archaeological sites represents the last physical evidence of the millennia of human occupation in this region. As such, the three First Nations have expressed the importance of preserving any and all archaeological sites in Vancouver.

While the entirety of Vancouver is unceded occupied territory, there are several known sites of intense significance due to their historical villages. Many of these locations have documented archaeological sites and are subject to Provincial archaeological protection.

For decades, these known sites have experienced little to no enforcement of the existing protections from any form of government. The Park Board and City have been complicit in occupying and altering sites that had continued occupation for millennia. The descendants of the inhabitants of those villages survive, and some have living memory of relatives who lived in those places. And yet the desecration of burials has continued since Vancouver’s inception, with complete disregard and disrespect. Continued erosion of the last remaining evidence of thousands of years of history for living people continues as the city continues to develop.



Stanley Park, 1888

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The Park Board has had a recent incident of disturbing ancestral remains. That this incident occurred despite the Park Board having hired a dedicated archaeologist, conducted staff archaeological training, and senior management being committed to avoiding archaeological disturbance in known sensitive areas, speaks to a larger systemic problem. In places designated and known to be of incredibly high significance (e.g. The Acropolis or Stonehenge), there are strict legal protections, penalties for transgression, and a wider social value placed on their histories. Both of the aforementioned sites are of an age or younger than the continued occupation of the village sites in question, and neither have living memory of their use.

Culture⁵

Cultural expression in parks is primarily manifested in two visible ways: Activities and Things. Both of these combine to express who the spaces are designed for and, whether intended or not, communicate who these spaces are **not** designed for. The nature of the cultural expression in a place can help to explain why certain populations feel unwelcome in public spaces, even if those spaces are declared to be “inclusive”.



Women playing field hockey at Brockton Point, c.1900

The erasure of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh occupation and presence in this territory is accomplished largely through the layering of activities and things on the physical landscape. Such cultural expressions collectively contribute to a narrative of Vancouver's history and occupation that excludes the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. The Vancouver Park Board has contributed to this erasure through the building of facilities and infrastructure; permitting and programming of activities and events in public parks and community centres; accepting donations of monuments and memorials on sacred sites; and acts of cultural appropriation.

⁵ Culture – All items and activities touched by human hands reflect the culture of the person doing the touching

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Permitting of Events

Given jurisdiction over public lands, Park Board has been faced with a multitude of requests for permitted activities in parks. Park Board meeting note archives reveal a mountain of requests that were denied, and a handful that were granted. This positions the Park Board as gatekeepers of cultural expression in parks.

From early on, the Park Board used its authority to influence the moral narrative being expressed in parks. For example, in 1892 the Board permitted J.L. Trendall of City Band to play Sunday concerts in Stanley Park, but stipulated that the content be limited to 'religious, national, and patriotic' airs. Play was prohibited in Stanley Park on Sundays (1912). Such decision-making is blatantly rooted in a particular spiritual/religious belief structure, and designed to set parameters around what constitutes acceptable public moral behaviour.

Monuments and Memorials

The Park Board has also been presented with a multitude of monuments and memorials requests throughout its entire history. The desire to secure the longevity of memory for people and events runs strong through every population. Thus, the Park Board has, in the interest of preserving public space for all, declined more donation proposals than it has accepted. The de facto narrative created by this gatekeeping expresses a value system of what is deemed worthy of commemoration, and who we venerate. There are statues of policy-makers, both influential and fleeting, monuments to industry and industrial workers, politicians, historical time markers that suggest this land's history begins in the 1800s, and recognition of those who lost their lives fighting for this country, but neglecting those Indigenous veterans who fought for a country they were never considered citizens of.

In more recent times, we have begun to honour events that speak of racist events in our collective history and the contributions of groups who were traditionally ignored. However, in many cases, the locations selected for all of our monuments are chosen for their prestige and beauty, which not coincidentally happen to be sites that were occupied for millennia, and where that history has been layered over and erased. Whether through ignorance, apathy, or malice, the effect on the displaced local First Nations is the same: we erase them.



Lord Stanley statue, Stanley Park

Current Park Board policy around the donation of public art, monuments, and memorials takes into consideration public consultation, aesthetic review by Public Art Committee, and technical review by Park Board staff. It also prohibits more than one monument to a person or event. More recently the policy includes Musqueam, Squamish, & Tsleil-Waututh review of siting. Park Board currently has no plan to holistically examine the existing monuments, memorials, and public art across the region with a view to considering accurate and fair representation to the whole of this region's history and all its people. However, in a

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preliminary step towards this holistic analysis, Park Board staff have undertaken a inventory project to compile data on current plaques in parks, categorizing for types of content and determining the narrative created as a whole.

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation has also found expression in Park Board history. In 1919, the Art, Historical, and Scientific Association suggested establishment of an Indian Village in Stanley Park. The proposal included teepees and totem poles, neither of which are associated with the local First Nations, and were proposed for a traditional village location. Ultimately the village never materialized, but totem poles were obtained through donation and purchase, and eventually consolidated at the current Totem Pole area near Brockton Point⁶. The continuing popularity of the totem pole site and commonly understood narrative that it represents local Indigenous culture contributes to the misrepresentation and erasure of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

With the onset of public and institutional interest in Truth and Reconciliation, projects have been initiated that seek to explore local First Nations cultures. Early attempts have largely centred non-Indigenous people as authorities on the subject, and even positioned them as educators within the Park Board programming system, guiding members of the public through the creation of “Indigenous” works.

Prioritizing non-Indigenous Ways of Knowing

By assuming authority and stewardship over parks and community centres, the Vancouver Park Board is in the position of decision-making based on input from both external and internal authorities. In the case of land stewardship, decisions have been made based on the best available colonial knowledge at the time of the decision. This has led to interventions into the existing ecosystems that have had lasting impact. Throughout this history of decision-making, local Indigenous knowledge of the land has been dismissed or overlooked.

Stewardship

Park Board prides itself on maintaining the majority of Vancouver’s green space, and creates policies and strategies to ever-improve its approach to land stewardship. Due to rapidly evolving views of appropriate stewardship, the Park Board’s archives include actions that intervened in the local ecosystem based off the colonial knowledge and preferences of the time. These include a campaign to rid Stanley Park of crows (1909), the acquisition of grey squirrels from the New York Park Department (1909), the subsequent directive to plant nut trees for squirrel food (1916), an invitation to the Vancouver Gun Club to shoot crows in Stanley Park (1910), and later, adding owls to this invitation (1916).

⁶ While the totem poles themselves are authentic original carvings or hand-done Aboriginal replicas, none of the poles saw traditional local protocols observed for their installation. To date, only *People Amongst the People* by Susan Point (*xʷməθkʷəjəm*) and the pole by Robert Yelton (*Skwxwú7mesh*) are by local artists. Also of note is *Shore to Shore* by Luke Marston descendant of and in commemoration of Portuguese Joe Silvey and his wives Khaltinaht and Kwatleematt, both local Aboriginal women, and all of whom lived in what is now called Stanley Park. These works begin to honour Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh visibility in their own lands.

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Sand was pumped into English Bay, Kitsilano, and Second Beach areas in 1914, and in 1915 a concessionaire at Kitsilano was awarded in exchange for removing driftwood from the beach. Today, driftwood continues to be removed from public beaches. These interventions into the existing landscape contribute to colonial land management preferences that lead to the alteration of ecosystems and do not respect local Indigenous knowledge.

The Park Board now has an Urban Forest Strategy, a Biodiversity Strategy, Rewilding Action Plan, Bird Strategy, Stanley Park Ecological Action Plan, and is impacted as well by the Greenest City Action Plan. Informed by research and scientific expertise, these plans are meant to represent the current best, wisest courses of action for protecting natural resources. In fact, these plans represent the research currently deemed authoritative. The local First Nations have the benefit of millennia of stewardship, coupled with modern scientific education, and a vested interest in working with all levels of government to protect their territory.



Queen Elizabeth Park

Perspectives on stewardship are not simply a product of scientific inquiry. Peoples' relationship to nature is impacted by their worldview, and that worldview affects the language we use and our understanding of our role in stewardship. It affects policies. It ultimately impacts the land.

Education

The prioritization of western ways of knowing is most evident in the educational resources Park Board chooses to support. In 1912, the Board approved a Provincial Government suggestion of setting up Botanical Gardens in Stanley Park for educational and research purposes. Today what little Indigenous ecological knowledge is supported and available in public park space is still provided by non-Indigenous-led organizations.

Prioritizing western ways of knowing over Indigenous ways of knowing is detrimental to the growth and evolution of our relationship to the lands we steward. It is detrimental to the land and its resilience.

Recent Progress: Consultation and the Stanley Park Plan

In 2011, the Park Board and Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations committed to working together on a comprehensive plan for Stanley Park. In that unprecedented step, the

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Park Board embarked on a process of self-discovery, as staff in the Working Group began to build working relationships with staff from each of the three Nations.

Park Board staff were well experienced in generating a variety of plans: management, technical, park plans, etc. However, early attempts to begin the process of building the comprehensive Stanley Park Plan met with unexpected obstacles which revealed ways in which the Park Board institution was ill-equipped to address and process Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh input and concerns. The ongoing activities and projects in the park were deemed an immediate concern, and until a process could be developed to review those projects and activities, a long-term plan could not be drafted.

One of the challenges that became apparent was the fact that routine repairs, upgrades, installations, and operations were impacting archaeologically rich areas, and the timelines that were defined for each project failed to account for adequate review time for the Nations. As well, while Nations stated their concerns clearly, the staff undertaking the reviews did not necessarily have the decision-making power or the cultural competency to convey the concerns or make recommendations for mitigation. In many cases, this was exacerbated because feedback was generally not sought or received until late enough into the project timeline as to effect budget and external expectations.

Normalizing project consultation became a priority. However, Park Board staff lacked administrative support tools and resources to track and follow-up on the consultation process. The onus of follow-up was put on the project lead, without adequate training on the aims and possible responses to input. As well, due to staff turnover and volume, the diffuse points of contact meant that relationships with Project Referral Specialists at the Nations failed to develop.

Park Board is in the process of refining the project consultation protocol, embedding best practices in day-to-day operations, and analyzing training and cultural competency needs for staff. Park Board staff are also investigating ways to communicate received feedback interdepartmentally, reducing the Nations' need to repeat themselves to many members of the same organization.

On a more fundamental level, staff have learned through the Stanley Park Plan process that our predecessors' behaviour directly impacts our relationships with the First Nations Band Offices today. If the Band Office responses were slow or absent, staff lacked the context to know that those responses were likely due to an established expectation that any input received would be unlikely to meaningfully change the project to consider First Nations concerns.

Staff are coming to understand that trust cannot be earned by simply setting-up meetings and offering opportunities for the Nations to be involved. What is needed is for the input already received to be heard, actioned, and applied to future planning and other projects. More homework must be done to determine how to better integrate the principles and input received thus far from the Nations before going to consultation.

The Stanley Park Plan process is proving to be a rich source of internal capacity building and learning, and the lessons attained there are being applied and shared across the organization.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Park Board Purpose

Throughout the Park Board's history of decision-making, one overriding sense of purpose pervades. Since its inception, the Board has seen itself as a protector of public green space and a provider of recreation and places of respite for the people.

In these days of rapid population increase, climate change, unabated development, and increased economic disparity, this role is ever more important. Premium places of beauty, replenishment, and natural flora are in reach of the public regardless of economic status.

The hard truth is that throughout the history of the Park Board, society has had a definition of "people" as being those who participate successfully in dominant colonial culture. Occupying unceded territory has left an uncomfortable question of what it means to us, the Park Board, who hold jurisdiction over the ancestral, federally and internationally recognized traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh. How does our commitment to spaces for "the people" sit alongside recognition of Aboriginal Rights and Title?

Given the increased pressures and risks posed by the environment, economy, population, and politics, it is only prudent to look at a paradigm shift in how the Park Board views itself as a steward of the land and provider of services to the people. At this critical juncture in time, we must form new relationships with the people of this land, whose history and worldview can mean the difference to this city's resilience. In order to build those relationships, we must first look at the truth of our colonial history, and analyze how to address the specific ways we have impeded our own ability to build those mutually beneficial relationships with local First Nations.

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July 2018