



November 13, 2018

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Trans, Gender Diverse, and Two-Spirit Programming Update and Corporate Sponsorship Fund Request

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board contribute \$30,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to support the expansion of Trans, Gender Diverse, and Two-Spirit (TGD2S) arts and culture programming in community centres and parks through new access and inclusion focussed initiatives delivered in partnership with the Queer Arts Festival.

POLICY

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.

[Building a Path to Parks and Recreation for All](#) outlines 77 recommendations to reduce barriers for transgender and gender diverse community members. The steering committee assists staff with implementing the report's mid- and long-term recommendations.

[Parks Board Arts Policy](#) vision statement commits to a city: "where community cultural development processes strengthen civil society, where parks and community centres reflect the cultural vitality of the community and where people are able to learn and express creativity in ways that build healthy communities."

The Vancouver Park Board's policy on the approved use of [Corporate Sponsorship Fund](#) 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 Strategic Plan. Between 2013 and 2018, several initiatives were undertaken with a focus on inclusion for trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit individuals.

In May 2013, the Board established the Trans and Gender Variant Inclusion (TGVI) Working Group to assist with community engagement that was focused on identifying barriers residents face in accessing parks and recreation services.

In April 2014, the Board received the report “Building a Path to Parks & Recreation for All” prepared by the TGVI Working Group, directing staff to create a new Trans and Gender Variant Implementation Steering Committee to assist staff in implementing report recommendations.

In June 2015, the Board appointed eight community members to the first TGVI Steering Committee. Their work focused on the creation of trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit specific programming, drafting initial training for staff, formalizing a city wide standard for washroom signs, and requesting additional staff to expedite the implementation of the Breaking Barriers report.

In October 2016, the Board approved funding to hire two TGD2S facilitators to develop and provide awareness training to staff, develop interpersonal and programming protocols, and assist in developing new programming. The new facilitators were also tasked with developing working relationships with existing TGD2S service providers.

Staff have continued establishing networks to enable direct communication between TGD2S communities and the Park Board, and to develop pilot recreation programming initiatives including:

- TGD2S weight room at the Britannia CC fitness centre launched in April 2018;
- Queer and Trans Youth Drop-in partnership with the West End CC, Sep-Dec 2018;
- Teen Pride Pool Party – the first Pride Weekend youth event at Templeton Park Pool to celebrate pride and connect youth;
- Cloudscape Comics comic arts event for trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit individuals and their families;
- “Two-Spirit and Allies Plant Walk” and workshop in collaboration with UNYA (Urban Native Youth Association) and Lori Snyder, indigenous herbalist in residence at Moberly Arts Centre; and
- Two-Spirit Pre-Pride Social - a community feast and celebration to kick off Pride season and foster engagement and meaningful dialogue between the Two-Spirit community, the LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee, the City of Vancouver, and the Park Board. 130 people attended and 60 individuals provided contact details for future events.

Queer Arts Festival

The Vancouver Park Board has a 20 year relationship with the Queer Arts Festival (QAF) as a founding Arts Partner with the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre. Over the course of their partnership with the Roundhouse, QAF has grown from a small community art exhibition into one of Canada’s most important festivals exploring TGD2S arts and culture. Each year, the festival theme ties together a curated visual art exhibition, performing arts series, workshops, artist talks, panels, and media art screenings.

The Queer Arts Festival has a national reach, connecting Vancouver communities to renowned artists such as AA Bronson, Kinnie Starr, and Kenneth Monkman, as well as local established

and emerging artists like cellist Cris Derksen, visual artist Paul Wong, and Machine Noisy Dance. In the months leading up to the Festival and throughout its run, artists lead community workshop series' for youth and adults on contemporary dance, play and fiction writing, music composition and performance and more. This work focuses on building artistic practice and bringing visibility and understanding to ideas, values, and stories that are important to TGD2S individuals who may not see their work reflected in mainstream culture. Historically, these workshop series have taken place at the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre.

DISCUSSION

Art is a powerful connector, communicator, and catalyst for public discussion. The Queer Arts Festival is a natural ally in the Park Board's inclusion and diversity work, given their demonstrated leadership and commitment to TGD2S inclusion in creative practice. There is synchronicity between Park Board goals and key elements of the QAF mandate, including commitments to engage in educational and community outreach through the arts to build public awareness, understanding, and acceptance of individuals and groups outside sexual and gender norms.

As Park Board staff continue to develop recreation programming for TGD2S individuals and families, working with the QAF to include new access and inclusion focussed initiatives will offer valuable resources and expertise to Park Board arts and culture programs. In addition to supporting program development, expanding this partnership will enable the Park Board to further connect communities to the work of professional TGD2S artists and art. Increasing the visibility of this art and culture in our neighbourhoods will help normalize TGD2S presence.

A one-time investment from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund would build on the Park Board's partnership with the Queer Arts Festival by supporting the following initiatives:

- 1) **Pilot a community-engaged arts workshop series, with the work created to be showcased at the 2019 Queer Arts Festival.** Historically, QAF artist-led workshop series have taken place at the Roundhouse in the lead up to the annual festival. In 2019, staff will work with QAF and community to identify other centres where community members feel safe and supported and develop music and art workshop series for those centres. Projects will culminate in a presentation of work during the festival at the Roundhouse. This pilot will introduce new artists/instructors to the Park Board system and facilitate an increase in TGD2S arts courses and workshops offered regularly, building more inclusive program rosters to support diverse communities of users.
- 2) **Showcase contemporary video art by diverse artists exploring and celebrating TGD2S culture and issues, in conjunction with, or as a lead up to the Queer Arts Festival.** QAF has amassed a significant archive of video work by trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit artists and will work with staff on offering ongoing, informal public screenings of this work in community centres and Park Board facilities in appropriate contexts such as lobbies and lounge areas.

In centres and facilities where TGD2S individuals may not feel comfortable or safe, public art can be a first step to sending a welcoming message that their experience is important and celebrated. Staff will work with QAF to identify an inventory of work appropriate for screenings and liaise with community centres to facilitate installation. This work is especially important in spaces where individuals may not feel confident to publicly self-identify by signing-up for participation in a workshop or project.

- 3) **Offer a limited number of free tickets to QAF performances.** In an effort to continue building a culture of inclusion, QAF will work with community centre staff and the Park Board communications team to draw a larger community audience to the annual festival at the Roundhouse. A system will be developed for connecting the community to free tickets for performances, talks, and film screenings. This work is important in spaces where individuals may not feel confident to publicly self-identify by signing up for a workshop or class, but may see a role as an audience member. It also removes a significant barrier to participation for the financially marginalized.
- 4) **Identify a QAF representative to act in an advisory role to assist staff** both in the proper implementation of programming and services and to identify or relay concerns regarding the accessibility of locations and customer service. The most recent TGD2S steering committee concluded on October 31, 2018, and it has been recommended that rather than establish another steering committee, staff engage TGD2S community members to review staff actions on an annual or semi-annual basis in an advisory role.
- 5) **Develop staff training focused on the importance of the arts in enabling diverse voices and introducing new perspectives.** QAF will work with Arts & Culture and Access & Inclusion staff teams on the development of this staff training. This work will include annual Queer Arts Festival Exhibition staff tours.
- 6) **Evaluate the new initiatives to consider the larger implications /activations across the Park Board system.** QAF will consult with Arts & Culture and Access & Inclusion coordinators throughout the various initiatives to evaluate the work and outcomes. This close evaluation process will reveal barriers to inclusion as well as creative solutions to overcoming those barriers. At the end of 2019, QAF will work with staff to report on successes, challenges, and larger markers for the integration of TGD2S arts and culture programming across the Park Board system. Informal consultation will continue beyond 2019.

FINANCIAL

In accordance with the Corporate Sponsorship Policy, one-time funding of up to \$30,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund will support QAF with artist's and curator's fees, workshop materials, tickets to festival performances, communications, coordination and facilitation with artists, QAF administrators, and Park Board staff groups. Artist, curator, and exhibition fees follow Canadian Artist Federation and Canada Council Standards.

This funding aligns with the criteria "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".

SUMMARY

A one-time investment from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund would support the Park Board's ongoing work with the Queer Arts Festival, a knowledgeable cultural partner that is well connected in the TGD2S arts community. The new QAF initiatives would help develop the Park Board's expertise and network, and would expand arts and culture programming in community centres and parks through a lens of accessibility and inclusion. Insight into potential changes in Park Board networks and program delivery that grow out of this work may be built into ongoing operating budgets in the future as necessary.

General Manager's Office
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC

Prepared by:
Marie Lopes – Coordinator, Arts, Culture & Engagement
Paul Czene – Coordinator, Access & Inclusion

ml/pc/jk/clc