



December 7, 2018

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Malcolm Bromley
General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Horticultural Standards in Vancouver Parks – 2019 Budget Request**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to respond to Parts A & B of the motion titled "[Horticultural Standards in Vancouver Parks](#)", with additional information for the Board to consider when reviewing the 2019 Park Board Operating Budget recommendations at the Special Board meeting on December 10, 2018.

The horticultural motion approved on December 3, 2018, included three (3) parts:

- A. To request additional funding from City Council for the 2019 Operating Budget;
- B. To revise the 2019 Park Board Budget submission to include the necessary funding; and
- C. To report back on scope, timeline and cost for a potential comparative study of horticultural staffing requirements.

While Part C has no impact on the 2019 Park Board Operating Budget, the proposed comparative study will help shape the future of horticultural services for many years to come by establishing acceptable service standards and identifying the resources required to ensure these service levels are deliverable. Staff look forward to reporting back in early 2019 with a suggested scope, timeline, and cost to complete the proposed comparative study.

Understanding that Part C will inform the Park Board's long-term strategy moving forward, staff recognize that Parts A & B are intended to provide an opportunity for more immediate improvements to horticultural services, cleanliness, and safety by seeking an additional investment in the 2019 Park Board Operating Budget. Due to the short timeframe provided, the proposed budget for submission to Council could not be revised as budget materials are prepared well in advance to allow sufficient time for review by both the public and elected officials. That said, the Board always has the ability to introduce specific funding requests when considering the operating and capital budgets, in addition to the proposed recommendation.

In response to the Board's direction for staff to outline the "funding necessary to enable increased care and maintenance in our cherished parks and gardens at all Vancouver parks, as well as the funding necessary to maintain the cleanliness and safety in time for the 2019 season", staff have provided the following information.

Park Operations has seen an annual average operating budget increase of 1.3% over the past five (5) years. Over this same time period, the division has been significantly impacted by the emerging issues of homelessness and public realm disorder. These issues have resulted in increased public complaints over park cleanliness and safety. As a result, the Park Operations division has adjusted its operations to divert funding intended for horticulture to the provision of other more basic services such as paper picking. In addition, highly skilled labour is also being



called upon to address these issues, among others, resulting in a noted decrease in acceptable horticultural service standards.

As well, limited financial investment in the Park Operations budget over the past five years has forced management to redirect funding originally put in place for regular full-time staffing to instead cover increased costs associated with materials and equipment, seasonal staffing costs such as overtime in peak periods and for storm response, and for equipment operator pool premiums.

Staff recognize that to efficiently and effectively address the dynamic changes in service needs in our parks, a flexible and adaptable budget is required. Managers need flexibility in determining both the type of position and overall staffing numbers throughout the year due to the impacts of weather and seasonality on park usage and maintenance requirements.

2019 Investment Proposal

Based on an initial high-level review of existing operations, staff estimate that an additional funding investment of \$610,000, on a permanent basis, would support the delivery of improved horticultural service standards in 2019. These funds would provide \$340,000 for staffing costs and \$270,000 for materials, fleet and equipment costs.

At the Special Board meeting on December 10, 2018, staff will present the 2019 Operating and Capital Budgets recommendation as outlined in the submitted report. As part of that presentation, staff will reference the Board's request for additional 2019 operating funds, as outlined in the motion approved on December 3, 2018, along with the proposed additional investment for 2019 as noted above.

Staff recommend that the Board approve the proposed 2019 Operating and Capital budgets as submitted, and then introduce a separate supplementary motion to seek from Council an additional \$610,000 for the 2019 Park Board Operating Budget to enable improvements to service provision to parks, with a focus on horticulture, cleanliness and safety.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Malcolm Bromley'.

Malcolm Bromley
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/sj/clc

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team
PB Communications