



# VANIER PARK PUMP TRACK EXPANSION

Balancing Environment  
& Recreation

Park Board Committee Meeting  
June 24, 2019

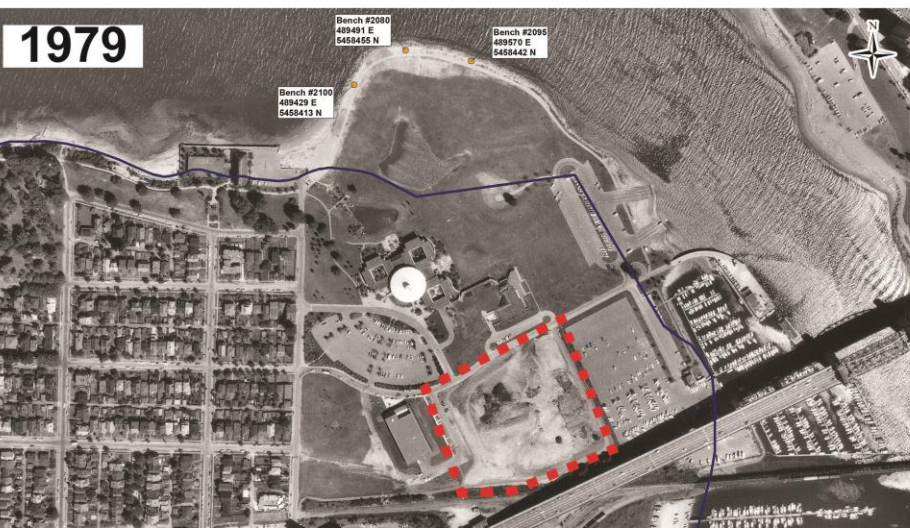


For the Board to approve the proposed Vanier Park upgrades in consideration of the three aspects of this project as follows:

- Installing a Permanent Eagle Nesting Pole;
- Constructing a Bicycle Pump Track; and
- Implementing Stewardship Improvements to the Vanier Park Forest.

- Context
- Project Intent
- Background
- FLNRO and consulting biologist (EDI) guidance
- Open House Results
- Next Steps







# Context



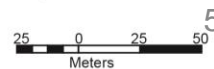
Coast Guard Nest (active prior to 2017)

Proposed permanent  
eagle nesting pole

Burrard Forest Eagle Nest  
(active since 2017)

Existing Bike Facility

Vanier Park Context  
Environment & Recreation  
May 30, 2019







Pump Track (e.g. Empire Field)



Nesting Pole



Artificial Nest



Stewardship



Direct link to our Strategic Plans and pending directions in VanPlay:

- Activity for children and youth in a forest setting – connect with nature
- Opportunities for great experiences in our parks – enhanced participation and active living for health and recreation
- Biodiversity Strategy– goal to restore 1 ha of natural area/year



- **1999:** Bald eagles establish nest near Coast Guard station
- **2010:** PB builds bicycle dirt jumps with the Vancouver Dirt Jump Coalition (VDJC), pump track contemplated but not constructed (funds lacking)
- **2017:** PB accepts VDJC request for the pump track (funding available), PB plans to construct



- **2018 March:** eagles build a second nest in an unhealthy tree above dirt jumps
- **2018 August** - New nest collapses in summer wind-storm - Park Board obtains Provincial permits and rebuilds the damaged nest above bike facility.
- **2018 September:** Pause to determine best approach for eagles. Staff work closely with FLNRO, Hancock Wildlife Foundation and Environmental Dynamics Inc. (EDI) to ensure proposed work adheres to Provincial Guidelines for Raptor Conservation.

- **2019:** Park Board close the facility for 8 weeks (March 19 - May 10) during critical eagle nesting period.
  - EDI has monitored the eagles since March and continue to assist in management strategies.
  - FLNRO recommend and support a permanent nesting pole as a viable long-term nesting solution.
  - Hancock Wildlife Foundation support the permanent nesting pole in principle and will build and install the permanent nest if approved by Board.





Bird's-Eye view of forest area





View of existing dirt jumps from parking lot





View of proposed pump track (foreground) and existing dirt jumps (background)





View of proposed nesting pole and interpretive signage



# Pump Track Design and Location Rationale



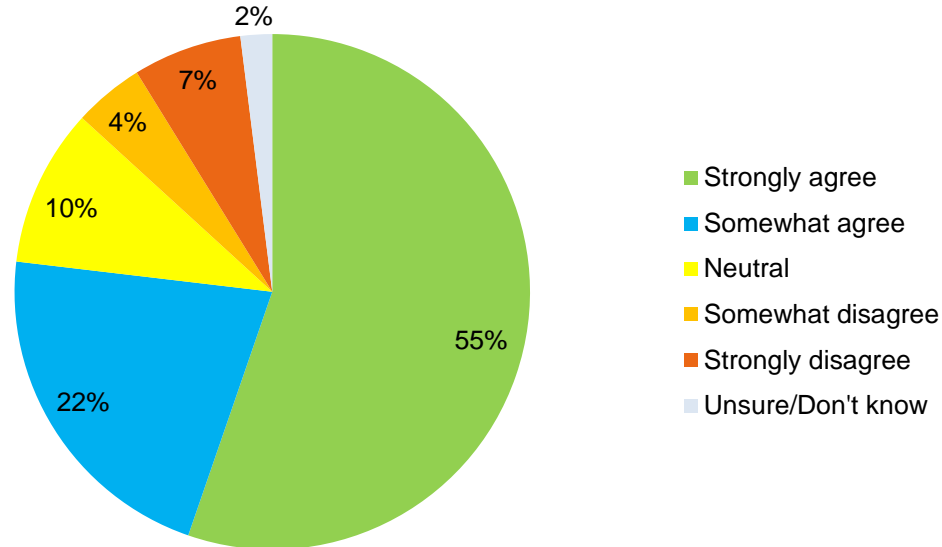
- Adjacency with existing facility
- Distance from nesting pole
- Proximity to parking lot and traffic
- Existing conditions (drainage)
- Invasive species mobility
- Minimize edge effect



- Open House held May 30 from 4-7pm
- 100 attended event
- 454 Survey respondents
- Positive response to proposed initiative
- 24% signed up for future stewardship involvement

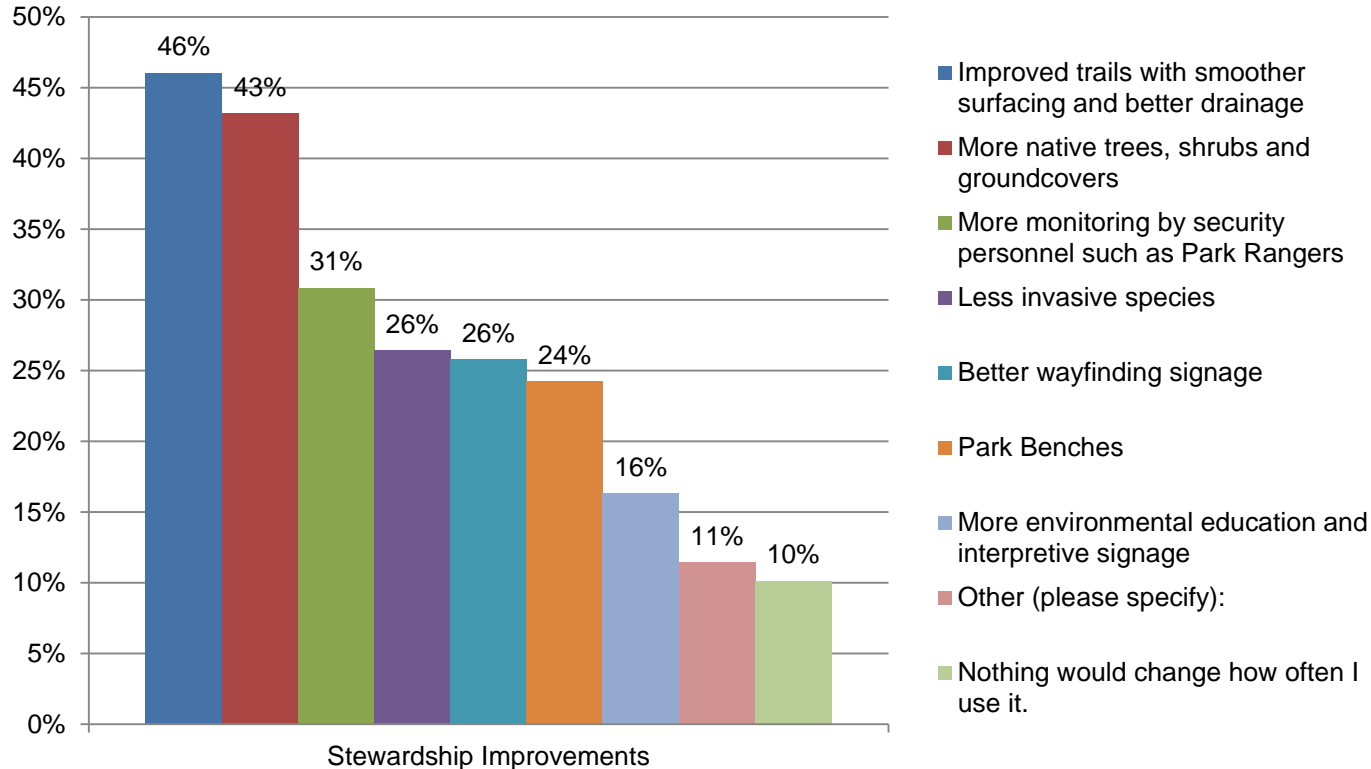


77% of respondents support the bicycle pump track

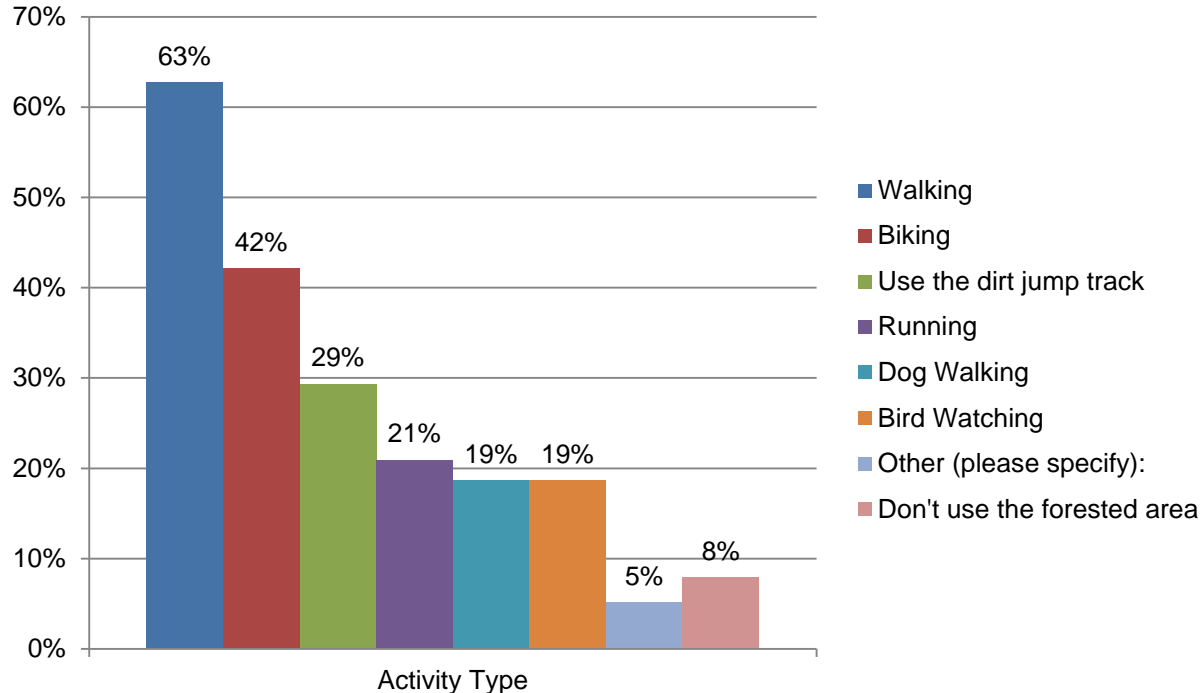




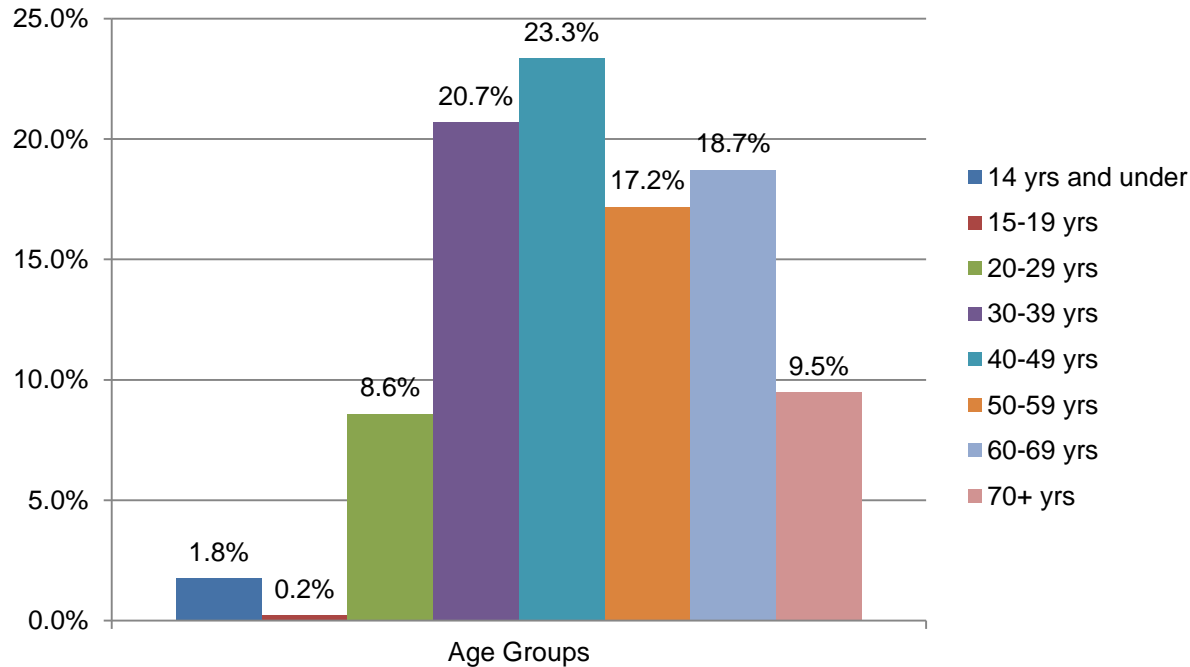
## Stewardship preferences



## Majority of respondents use the forest area for walking

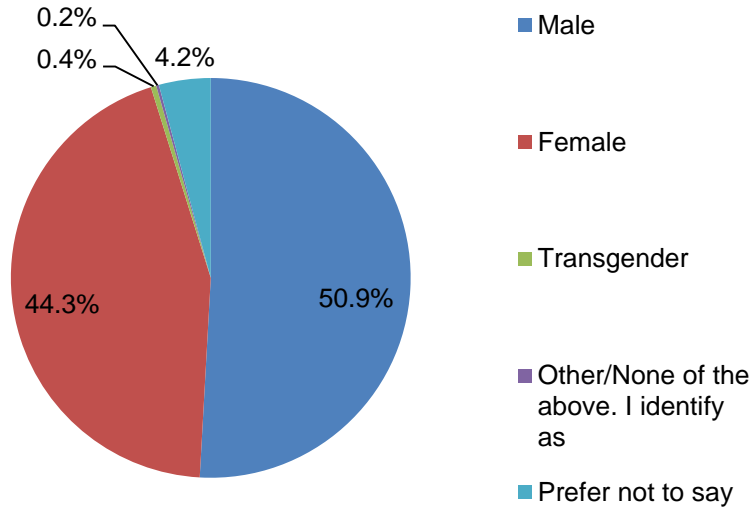


## Wide cross section of ages responded

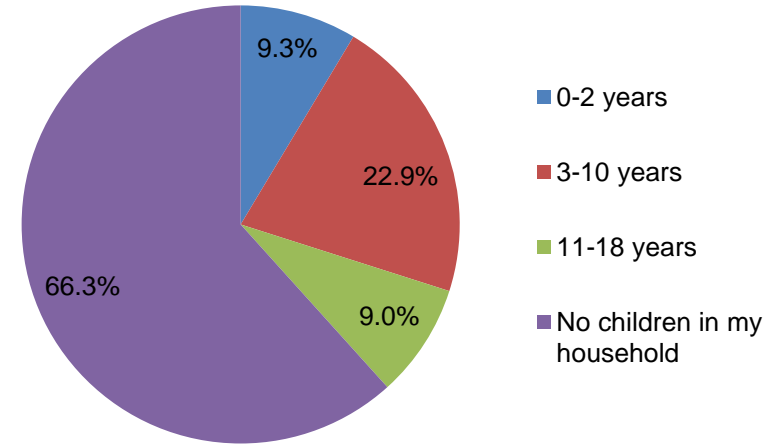




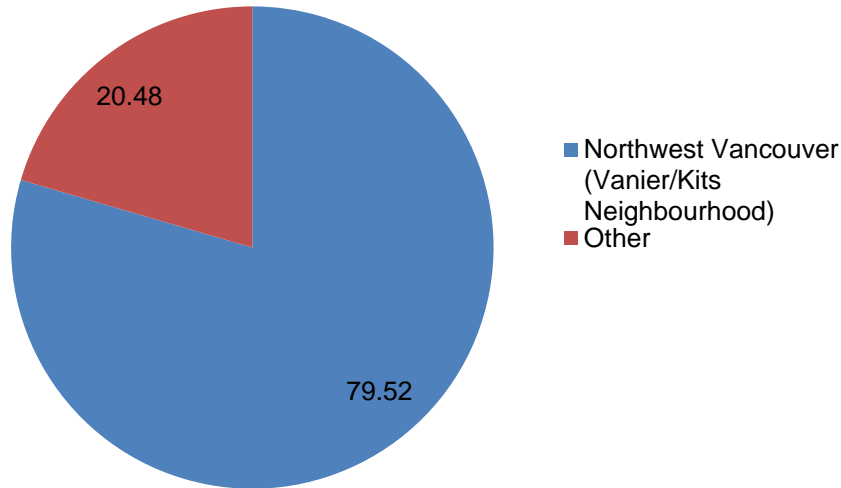
## Response rate by gender



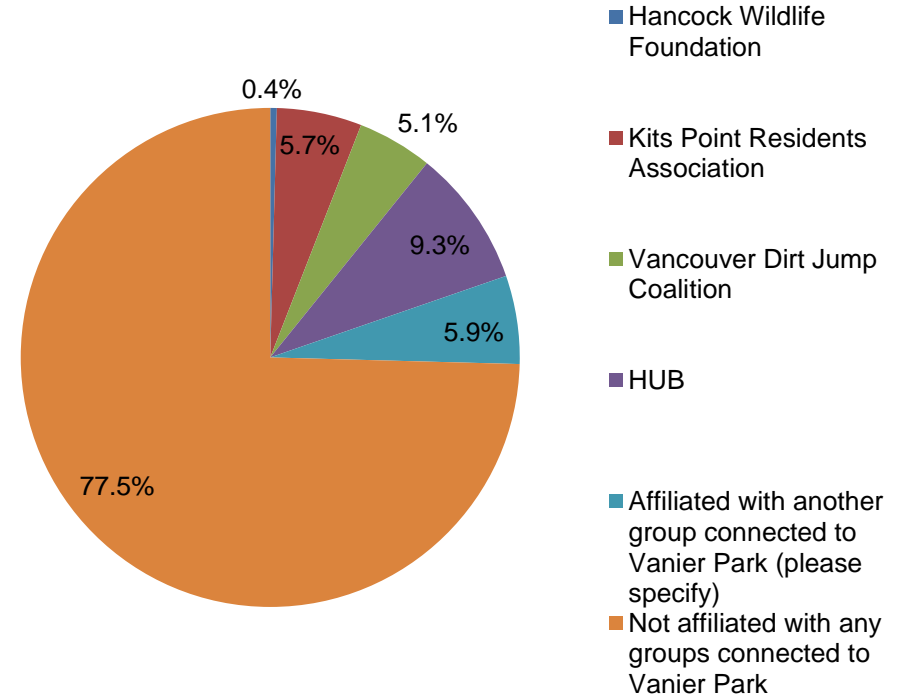
## 66% of respondents do not have children at home



## Response rate by Postal Code



## Response rate by affiliation



# Letter of Support – FLNRO (June 7, 2019)



*“The Province has reviewed the proposed mitigation offset in Vanier Park and supports the proposal as it provides the eagles with a long term safe solution.”*



June 7, 2019

File: 78630-20

VIA EMAIL - Joe Mcleod [joe.mcleod@vancouver.ca](mailto:joe.mcleod@vancouver.ca)

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
2099 Beach Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6G1Z4

Dear Mr. Joe Mcleod:

**Re: Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation proposed bike park expansion project and Bald Eagle mitigation strategies in Vanier Park**

The Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNR) would like to recognize the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (VBPR) for the significant effort they have done integrating the Province's goals to protect wildlife values while balancing their own community recreation and environmental stewardship values relating specifically to a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) nest tree within Vanier Park. Trees that act as nesting sites for bald eagles often take several hundred years to grow and the nests within these trees are legally protected year round under Section 34 of the *Wildlife Act*.

In 2018 a breeding pair of bald eagles established a new nest site within Vanier Park, while also maintaining a secondary nest at the nearby Canadian Coast Guard station. This new nest site is in a co-dominant stem in a black cottonwood tree (*Populus trichocarpa*) where the secondary stem has fallen. Black cottonwood trees in the South Coast typically act as initial colonizing trees within cleared land; however they often suffer from root and stem rot and are therefore short lived. Unfortunately, this particular nest site is not an ideal location due to the existing bike park infrastructure and because it is within VBPR's proposed bike park expansion footprint.

When conflict arises or nest trees become hazardous, solutions are sought to provide alternative options for nesting eagles to help support the long-term success of the species. In particular instances, installation of poles and nest platforms give eagles alternative options that can be maintained to include safeguards for both eagles and the public. Through inventive thinking and consultation with many stakeholders, the VBPR has proposed a mitigation option of a nest pole and platform set back within Vanier Park forest. The Province has reviewed the proposed mitigation offset in Vanier Park and supports the proposal as it provides the eagles with a long term safe solution. If you would like to discuss this issue further, please contact Joel Gillis, Wildlife Biologist by phone (604) 833-1896 or by email at [Joel.Gillis@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Joel.Gillis@gov.bc.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Josh Malt".

Josh Malt  
Resource Management, South Coast Terrestrial Wildlife Section Head  
Tel: (604) 586-2889

Ministry of Forests, Lands,  
Natural Resource Operations  
and Rural Development

Resource Management  
South Coast Natural Resource Region

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- On a scale of 1-5: *“During the monitoring sessions to-date, the highest rating documented for the eagles’ response to disturbance stimuli is a ‘2’ or ‘very low’ which typically receded to a ‘1’ within a few minutes.”*
- *“An artificial nest pole is a viable solution shown to be successful in past projects. .... the eagles at Vanier Park have shown to be adaptable, like many Lower Mainland bald eagles.”*

June 14, 2019

EDI Project No: 18V0593

Vancouver Park Board  
2099 Beach Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6G 1Z4

Attention: Joe McLeod, Landscape Architect Project Manager

RE: **Vanier Park Bald Eagle's Nest 2019 Monitoring Program**

As per your request, EDI Environmental Dynamics Inc. (EDI) is pleased to provide a summary of the monitoring program conducted to-date in 2019 for the bald eagle nest located above the bike skills track (“bike park”) in Vanier Park, Vancouver, BC.

## BACKGROUND & 2019 MONITORING PROGRAM

EDI was retained in late March 2019 to initiate monitoring of the bald eagle pair nesting in Vanier Park, and determine if the nest located above the bike park was actively being used this breeding season. Bald eagles have been nesting in Vanier Park since approximately 1999 (Hancock Wildlife Foundation 2018), originally in a black cottonwood tree near the Canadian Coast Guard Station at the end of Whyte Avenue; however, in 2018, a second nest was built in the woodlot southwest of the original nest, adjacent to the bike park.

Initial monitoring conducted on March 26 determined the nest above the bike park was actively being used. At that time the bald eagles appeared to be incubating one or more eggs in the nest based on the presence of an adult eagle laying low in the nest for the duration of the survey. EDI has since conducted routine monitoring of this nest to-date, consisting of approximately one 2-hour (on average) monitoring session each week, conducted at varying times of the day (from early morning to early evening). Monitoring is conducted from a small hill north of the bike park, in front of the City of Vancouver’s Archives building (Figure 1), and provides a direct line of sight to the active bald eagle nest.

Monitoring is conducted using a combination of binoculars and spotting scope. During monitoring sessions, eagle behaviour is recorded, along with time of each observation, including arrivals and departures with direction of flight, activity changes and parental switch-off. In addition, disturbances observed during the monitoring session are documented and the eagles’ response to the disturbance stimuli is assessed. The rating scheme used to record the level of apparent distress of the eagle(s) in response to various disturbance stimuli is provided in Table 1. This rating scheme was based on and modified from literature obtained from the Bald Eagle Monitoring Guidelines (USFWS 2006).

- **Aug 1 – Sept 15:** Install new nesting pole and relocate existing active nest, followed by pump track construction and a forest clean-up day
- **Fall 2019 – Fall 2021:** Invasive species removal, tree, shrub and groundcover planting, pathway improvements, wayfinding and environmental education signs
- **2022 and beyond:** ongoing stewardship of Vanier Park urban forest

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the installation of a structural pole, construction of a nesting platform and relocation of the existing eagles nest, to a location at the central-west area of the Vanier Park forest as recommended by Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and Hancock Wildlife Foundation; and
- B. THAT the Board approve the construction of a bicycle pump track facility adjacent to the existing Vanier Park bicycle dirt jumps facility; and
- C. THAT the Board approve expanded stewardship initiatives and development of a comprehensive long-term stewardship strategy for the Vanier Park forest.



