



July 9, 2019

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Westward Street Party – Special Event

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve an application from the Yaletown Business Improvement Association (“Yaletown BIA”), in collaboration with the Westward Music Festival, to host the Westward Street Party family-friendly viewing area at Yaletown Park on Friday, September 13, 2019, from 4:00 to 10:00pm and Saturday, September 14, 2019, from 12:00noon to 10:00pm, with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager of the Park Board; and
- B. FURTHER THAT the Park Board approve an application from the Yaletown BIA for an all ages Special Event Permit from the BC Liquor & Cannabis Regulation Branch to serve alcohol at the aforementioned location and dates, with a maximum capacity of 400 guests.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Westward Music Festival (“Festival”) is a celebration of Vancouver’s music culture which takes place at several admission-based venues across the city. In order to expand the reach of the Festival, remove economic barriers, and bring the vibrancy of this event to the Yaletown community, the Yaletown Business Improvement Association (“Yaletown BIA”) is proposing to work with the Festival organizers to host a free outdoor concert event in the Yaletown neighbourhood. To achieve this objective, the Yaletown BIA is seeking to use Yaletown Park as a family-friendly viewing area for the event. The purpose of this report is to present the Westward Street Party initiative to the Park Board, paying particular attention to the proposed activation in Yaletown Park, with the objective of obtaining Board approval for the organizer’s request.

BOARD AUTHORITY / POLICY

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, activities, fees, and improvements that occur within designated parks.

As informed by the [Special Event Policy & Guidelines](#) approved by the Board in December 2003, as well as current practices, Park Board approval is required for special events not included in the Annual Calendar of Major Special Events and/or that are in variance with one or more Park Board by-laws. On May 13, 2019, the Board [directed staff to update the aforementioned guidelines](#). Concurrent with this direction, the Board also instructed staff to maintain and support the Park Board’s current portfolio of commercial events and activities, but issued a moratorium on the introduction of any new commercial initiatives until after the Special

Event Guidelines have been updated and approved by the Board. This application is not impacted by that decision since the Westward Street Party is a free and not-for-profit event.

BACKGROUND

The Westward Music Festival is produced by John Donnelly & Associates, a Vancouver-based event and entertainment company. Introduced in 2017, the Festival is a celebration of the spirit of Vancouver and its world class music industry. The event enables attendees to explore community, and experience live music that forms the fabric of the city's music culture. As in previous years, this four-day music event will be held at several admission-based venues across the city, including the Orpheum Theatre, Vogue Theatre, The Imperial, Biltmore Cabaret, Fox Cabaret, and Rickshaw Theatre. The Festival is expected to attract an estimated 30,000 people during the course of the event.

For 2019, in an attempt to expand the reach of the Festival, remove economic barriers, and bring the vibrancy of the event to the Yaletown neighbourhood, the Yaletown BIA is proposing to work with the Westward Music Festival organizers to host a free outdoor concert event in Yaletown featuring Festival programming elements. Specifically, the Yaletown BIA is proposing to stage two nights of local concerts at 900 Hamilton Street (which falls under the City of Vancouver's jurisdiction) on September 13 & 14, 2019. This free program will be called the Westward Street Party ("Street Party").

DISCUSSION

In order to deliver these two nights of local concerts, a small stage will be erected at 900 Hamilton Street and feature mid-level music recording artists. On-site activations to support the Street Party will include food trucks, craft beverage suppliers, and vendors. This free event will be delivered on Friday, September 13 from 4:00 to 10:00pm and Saturday, September 14 from 12:00 noon to 10:00pm.

To maximize concert-goer experience and better support the Street Party, the organizers would like to activate and integrate Yaletown Park into the event as a family-friendly viewing area and family zone. Key park elements would include high top tables and family-friendly games. Although no vending or alcohol sales would occur in the park (those activities would take place in City of Vancouver spaces), activating and integrating Yaletown Park into the event area would mean that alcohol could be consumed within park space, thereby allowing families and other attendees to enjoy food and beverages in a more comfortable and relaxed setting away from the front of the stage and without being separated.

To accommodate the event, set-up would start on Friday, September 13 at 8:00am and tear-down would be completed by 11:00pm on Saturday, September 14. Park Board staff would also work with the organizers to ensure that any public access restrictions during set-up and tear-down are minimized. The capacity of the combined City of Vancouver and Park Board spaces would be 1,133 people (733 on City of Vancouver space and 400 on Park Board space). Security will be provided to manage ID verification, bag checks, attendee entry and exit, and capacity counts. Members of the Vancouver Police Department will also be deployed at the event to further ensure public safety and security.

CONSIDERATIONS

This proposal has been conditionally approved by key FEST Committee members, including the Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services, British Columbia Liquor & Cannabis Regulation Branch, and the City of Vancouver's Special Events and Traffic & Data Management departments.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to Board approval, Park Board staff will work with both the organizer and the FEST Committee to develop the requisite detailed event plans (e.g. traffic management, safety, sanitation, etc.) which will be reviewed and approved by staff. Neighbourhood notification will also be completed.

CONCLUSION

The collaboration between the Yaletown BIA and the organizers of the Westward Music Festival represents an exciting expansion to free and accessible music programming in Vancouver, and would activate an underutilized Vancouver park in a unique manner. Park Board staff have carefully considered the various aspects of this application with organizers and stakeholders, and are confident that this initiative can be executed successfully and as intended. Accordingly, staff recommend that the Board approve this application as outlined above.

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