



## Vancouver Aquatics Strategy & Blue Flag

*Excerpted from Minutes 2020-12-08*

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MOVED by Commissioner Demers  
SECONDED by Commissioner Mackinnon

### WHEREAS:

1. In May 2014, the Board [approved a motion](#) requesting staff to investigate the benefits of Blue Flag awards for Vancouver beaches and marinas; the subsequent [report back](#) from staff recommended Blue Flag to be “monitored for future consideration”;
2. Blue Flag is the world’s most-recognized award for clean, accessible, safe and enjoyable beaches. It is used in 46 countries. Blue Flags are awarded to beaches and marinas that meet high environmental, safety and cleanliness standards;
3. This Blue Flag initiative is an opportunity for Park Board to build on its current success, connect more people to water, and create lasting benefits for Vancouver’s waterfront, tourism and small businesses;
4. With the support of a private funder, whereby all costs incurred in the process of applying for a Blue Flag award are covered, the Park Board can be the first to bring this prestigious award to British Columbia.
5. Swim Drink Fish is a registered Canadian charity established in 2001 that uses citizen science and communications technology to inspire people to know and safeguard local waters. In early 2020, Swim Drink Fish took over the National Operator role and works with Blue Flag International to connect Canadian beach managers with other waterfront leaders from around the world.
6. A Blue Flag award would help the Park Board achieve its VanPlay Strategic Bold Moves, specifically to “protect and enhance the environment”;
7. As noted in [VanPlay’s](#) direction to Weave the City Together, the Approaches to Action contain a recommendation to “cultivate connection to nature through education, programming and stewardship” (N.4 Connection to Nature), with initiatives including:
  - N.4.1 Engage residents in fun and easy environmental monitoring, citizen science and environmental education programs to demonstrate the benefits of an ecological approach to horticulture and naturally managed spaces in parks.
  - N.4.2 Incorporate environmental education and interpretive signage into the park system in collaboration with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.
  - N.4.3 Support environmental stewardship by providing expertise and resources, giving appreciation and recognition, and supplying training capacity building opportunities to community stewardship groups and environmental art projects.



8. As outlined in VanSplash, the 25-year strategy for aquatics in Vancouver, “recommendations for beaches place a particular emphasis on building on the current success of our beaches”, including:
  - Recommendation 1: Consider activating or enhancing the range of aquatic experiences.
  - Recommendation 3: Invest in maintaining and enhancing existing beaches.
  - Recommendation 4: Consider enhancing the diversity of experiences offered at/from the beach.
9. Blue Flag awards can provide an opportunity for the Park Board and Swim Drink Fish to collaborate on environmental monitoring, citizen science and environmental education programming:
  - a. Monitoring the water at Blue Flag beaches is a part of Blue Flag requirement. Swim Drink Fish’s Vancouver Water Monitoring Program has already trained hundreds of citizen scientists;
  - b. Swim Drink Fish commits to lend its expertise in providing public water literacy workshops and education;
  - c. Blue Flag information boards provide a tangible opportunity to appreciate and recognize participating community stewardship groups in collaboration with First Nations.
10. Collection of required water quality data for five potential Blue Flag beaches (English Bay, Kitsilano Beach, Jericho Beach, Locarno Beach, and Spanish Banks) was completed in 2020. This data satisfies an important Blue Flag application requirement.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to complete one Blue Flag beach application by January 13, 2021.
- B. FURTHER THAT a beach management committee is established and meet twice yearly.

REFERRED

MOVED BY: Commissioner Coupar

THAT the motion be referred to staff to provide more information regarding the financial implications and the work required, including consultation with the First Nations.

CARRIED

*(Commissioners Demers and Dumont opposed)*