



MOTION ON NOTICE

Submitted at the Regular Board meeting held on 2021-02-08

Bodyweight Exercising and General Fitness in Parks – 2021 Pandemic Communications Plan and VanPlay Target Adjustment

SUBMITTED BY: Commissioner Demers

WHEREAS:

1. Bodyweight exercises are strength-training exercises that use the individual's own weight to provide resistance against gravity. The simplest bodyweight exercises require no equipment. Most bodyweight exercises require limited equipment such as bars, rings, benches, etc.
2. Basic outdoor fitness equipment such as bars, rings, and benches may be used by people of all ages and abilities, including people with restricted mobility, and present zero financial accessibility barriers and only limited logistical barriers.
3. VanPlay, the Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan, recommends one new outdoor fitness location per capital plan.
4. The Park Board currently has jurisdiction over 240 parks, of which a few contain at least some purpose-built elements that would qualify for outdoor bodyweight exercising. These parks are unevenly distributed throughout the city and, in most cases, offer only a limited (and limiting) selection of equipment. The most notable include:
 - traditional rings & bars at Kitsilano Beach, Stanley Park, and Prince Edward Park;
 - new equipment at China Creek Park (Fall 2019) and Jones Park (Fall 2020);
 - a 'parkour' facility at Empire Fields (2015);
 - a seniors' wellness circuit at Tisdall Park;
 - a seniors-friendly outdoor fitness area in South Memorial Park (Spring 2019).
5. The Park Board also has many parks that offer natural features (such as steep hills) and built features (such as walls, boulders, benches, etc.) that can be activated for bodyweight exercising.
6. The COVID-19 pandemic is having major impacts on the ability of the Park Board to deliver the recreational services required by the residents of Vancouver. For example, indoor gyms were closed for several months in 2020 then re-opened only at limited capacity; fitness classes were cancelled. Financial and sanitary uncertainty remains for 2021 and beyond.
7. The COVID-19 pandemic is having financial impacts on the residents of Vancouver; is undermining their confidence towards indoor public spaces and group activities. Such shifts in financial ability and attitude may remain for 2021 and beyond.



8. In the last 20 years, the world faced 6 significant viral threats – the current COVID-19 has turned out to be the worst. Such virus-induced pandemics will most likely occur again, to degrees and intensity difficult to predict.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to develop a communications plan for 2021 to promote and facilitate the usage of Vancouver parks and installations for outdoor bodyweight exercising and general fitness, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic health and safety restrictions impacting indoor and group fitness activities.
- B. FURTHER THAT staff encourage the Vancouver School Board to participate and contribute to the development of this communication plan.
- C. THAT, in order to increase the resiliency of Vancouver's recreational system against disruptions such as health crises and financial shortfalls, the Park Board direct staff to evaluate the VanPlay target of one new outdoor fitness location per capital plan and report back to the Board with recommendations.