



Park Board General Manager's Report June 07, 2022

The following report is intended to provide an overview and update on recent and upcoming activities within the Park Board.

Bloedel Conservatory and VanDusen Botanical Garden Spring Events

Bloedel Conservatory and VanDusen Botanical Garden have had several recent and upcoming events to celebrate the spring gardening season.

- **Spring Strings:** VanDusen Garden hosted a 2 day contemporary cello concert by a group of classically trained musicians, Low Strung, from Yale University on May 28 and 29. A promotional video for the event was well received with a reach of over 10,000 views on Instagram. Tickets were sold out for both days, with an attendance of over 3000 over the 2 days.
- **Year of the Garden & Garden Days:** 2022 is the Year of the Garden; Bloedel and VanDusen will be celebrating Garden Days from June 11 to 19 with planned activities at both gardens. Interpretive educational stations will be set up at both Bloedel (June 11) and VanDusen (June 18). Guardians of the Garden, an interactive informational activity, will launch on June 10 at VanDusen to kick off Garden Days. This year's Guardians of the Garden will highlight conifers and how we connect with conifers through food, medicine and culture, and the importance of coniferous forests in the fight against climate change. Master Gardener clinics will be held on June 11, 18 and 19 with a focus on ways the home gardener can make a difference towards addressing climate change.
- **National Indigenous Peoples Day Activities at VanDusen:** Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator, Geronimo Alec (member of the Wet'suwet'en Nation), will be sharing his knowledge highlighting the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and plants through self-guided tours that will be available on June 17. Geronimo will be onsite at VanDusen on June 20, to provide guided tours discussing material from the self-guided tours. Tours are free, but require registration. Tours offered at 10am, 1pm and 3pm.

Retirement – Alex Downie, Manager of Park Operations

Alex began his career with Park Board in 1985 as a Botanical Technician at VanDusen Botanical Garden where he created their first computerized plant records and mapping system. In 1993, Alex became Supervisor of Bloedel Conservatory where he greatly expanded the bird collection and developed an interpretive program for students and visitors. In 2001, Alex's role grew to include supervision of Queen Elizabeth Park. During his tenure the QE Park Plaza was renewed, view corridors from the top of the park restored, and the arboretum enhanced with new plantings. Alex was instrumental in the effort to save the Bloedel Conservatory from closure after the 2010 Winter Olympics. In 2012, Alex moved to Evans Yard to take charge of Neighbourhood Parks and Street Horticulture. In 2016, he assumed the role of Operations Manager, overseeing various portfolios including Urban Forestry, Buildings and Structures Maintenance, Park Experience, Specialty Parks, and Fleet Operations.

Throughout his career, Alex supported and fostered the proud horticultural legacy of the Park Board. He is a keen gardener and passionate plantsman, known as the 'go-to' person to identify that mystery tree or shrub, while telling you where it's from and how to grow it. Many may not know, but Alex is an instructor for the VanDusen Master Gardeners Advanced Training program, and co-authored "The Woodland Garden", a book on designing and creating naturalistic garden spaces.

Instead of slowing down in retirement, Alex will be doing a lot of travelling with his wife Barbara. His plans include spending more time with family and friends, while enjoying his gardening and classic car hobbies.

East Fraser Lands New Park Construction (South Kinross)

An Invitation to Tender (ITT) will be issued in early June to identify suppliers for the construction of the new 0.40 hectare park in the East Fraser Lands (River District) development referenced as South Kinross for the project. As outlined in the 2017 [Board report](#), the new park amenities will include a destination playground, incorporating play for a range of ages with a focus on natural play elements, including water play. The park will also include a naturalized corridor, rain garden, and wetland channel for stormwater treatment with low native plantings that help create habitat connections between the Fraser River and Kinross Ravine Park to the north. Construction is targeted to commence in late summer.

Upcoming Council Business (related to or impacting parks & recreation):

Council to receive a report regarding [Development Application and Permitting Modernization Task Force – Report Back on Design Guidelines and Protection of Trees By-Law Policies](#) on June 7. This would accelerate permit processing times and would require a tree permit to remove trees 20cm in diameter or over. Previously this affected trees 30cm or over in diameter.

Council to receive a referral report regarding the [East Fraser Lands Waterfront Precinct](#) on June 7, which includes considerations for the in-kind delivery of the community centre. This would shift responsibility for design and construction from the City to the developer, and in doing so, would secure a funding mechanism and timeline for the delivery of the new centre.

Council to receive a report on the [Sites for 2022 Alcohol Consumption in Public Plazas Program](#) on June 8, outlining the locations for this year's program and the by-law amendments necessary for this program.

Council to receive a report on [Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy](#), with recommendations from staff that would support the strategy and increased childcare in Vancouver. Recommendations include requesting a meeting between the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the City of Vancouver as soon as possible to discuss ways to advance policy, planning and delivery of childcare at the City of Vancouver and all its partners, including the Vancouver Board of Education (VBE) and BC Housing.

Council to reconvene on June 9 to continue asking questions of staff followed by a debate and decision on the [Broadway Plan](#). Previously, Council received a presentation from staff and heard from speakers regarding the proposed plan.

At the June 14th Public Hearing, Council will be considering a [rezoning of 1406-1410 East King Edward Avenue](#) to permit the development of a 13-storey mixed-use building, with 109 social housing units, led by the Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency. This site is located immediately north of Kingcrest Park. Park Board staff is working with the City to minimize temporary impacts on the park that may result from construction of this development.



Board Briefing Memos and Emails: May 17 to June 7, 2022

Date	Topic
May 24	Communications, Marketing and Engagement Leadership Team – Board Update
June 2	Ammonia Leak at Killarney Community Centre
June 3	Kafka's Café at Smithe & Richards New Park
June 6	Extreme Heat Mitigation and Preparedness
June 7	East Fraser Lands Community Centre Delivery Update