



June 8, 2022

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Symphony at Sunset - Corporate Sponsorship Fund Request

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve a contribution of up to \$100,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to support the delivery of the Symphony at Sunset concert event at Sunset Beach Park on July 2, 2022.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Symphony at Sunset concert event is a collaboration between the Vancouver Park Board (Park Board) and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO). This free and fully inclusive cultural initiative was first held in 2018 and quickly established itself as a summer time favorite for Vancouverites. After a two-year absence due to the pandemic, the Park Board and VSO are preparing to once again host this community event in July 2022. Park Board staff will look to fund this year's Symphony at Sunset event through surpluses generated by its Business Services operations, however, due to higher than anticipated post-pandemic event costs, Park Board staff are seeking approval to utilize up to \$100,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to potentially assist in the delivery of this initiative. The purpose of this report is to review the Symphony at Sunset event with the Board, and seek the Board's approval for this funding request.

BOARD AUTHORITY, POLICY, PREVIOUS DECISIONS

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.

In July 2016, the Park Board approved a motion, titled [Symphony in the Park](#), which directed staff to collaborate with the VSO to deliver an open air Symphony in the Park free concert for Vancouverites at Sunset Beach Park or an alternate suitable location.

In October 2020, the Park Board approved the [VanPlay Framework](#), for Vancouver's [Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan](#). VanPlay sets out priorities and provides tools and policies to support the pursuit of equity, connectivity and access to parks and recreation for all. The Symphony at Sunset event supports and aligns with VanPlay's directions to "Welcome Everyone" (parks and recreation experiences that improve quality of life) and "Weave the City Together" (parks, nature, recreation and culture integrated into everyday life).

The Park Board's policy on the approved use of the [Corporate Sponsorship Fund](#) was developed in 1998 and includes the following use criteria:

- a) To fund one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will support revenue-generating activities and the money repaid into the Corporate Sponsorship Account from the increased revenues within a period of three years.

- b) To fund initiatives with one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will result in improved efficiencies.
- c) To fund one-time expenditures over and above the existing funding levels in the operating budget which are beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system.

All contributions from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund require Board approval. The recommendation within this report aligns with Criteria C.

BACKGROUND

The power of live music and symphony can be transformative and create lasting and cherished memories. The purpose of the VSO is to enrich and transform lives through music. The VSO fulfills this purpose by presenting passionate, high-quality performances of classical, popular and culturally diverse music, creating meaningful engagement with audiences of all ages and backgrounds wherever they perform, and developing and delivering inspirational education and community programs.

The Park Board's Arts Policy confirms the Board's mandate in arts and recognizes the arts as a vital element in a creative and balanced city, and seeks to actively facilitate participation in and access to the arts for all. Further, one of the key directions of the Park Board's VanPlay Framework is to integrate parks, nature, recreation and culture into everyday life ("Weave the City Together").

Symphony at Sunset is an open-air symphony concert event previously held in July 2018 and July 2019 at Sunset Beach Park. This free and truly accessible family event is a collaboration between the Park Board and the VSO. Set amongst the sweeping views of English Bay, the initiative proved extremely popular and attracted between 10,000 and 12,000 Vancouverites and visitors to this iconic park location for each performance. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, this valued community event was not delivered in 2020 or 2021.



Figure 1: Vancouver Symphony Orchestra at the 2019 event



Figure 2: View of attendees at the 2019 event

DISCUSSION

With the lifting of public health restrictions, the Park Board and the VSO are pleased to once again be collaborating to host Symphony at Sunset in July 2022. This year's event will celebrate a return to live events, connect Vancouver residents and visitors alike, and enable concert goers to experience a live symphony concert in a free and accessible manner without barriers. It will also engage community, add vibrancy to public park spaces, and promote cross-cultural diversity and inclusion.

Delivering free public events of this caliber, however, requires both strong partners and appropriate resources. The costs incurred by the Park Board to deliver this event in 2019 totaled approximately \$150,000. However, in the current post-pandemic environment, the projected costs associated with delivering this valued community event will be considerably higher in 2022. Park Board staff will look to fund this year's Symphony at Sunset concert event through surpluses generated by its Business Services operations but are also seeking to mitigate the cost increases and facilitate event delivery with a one-time funding contribution of up to \$100,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund. These funds would be used to:

- Assist in addressing increased event supplier expenses;
- Help offset increased operational/logistical requirements and their associated costs; and
- Reduce potential pressure on the Park Board's annual operating budget.

FINANCIAL / OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Park Board's Corporate Sponsorship Fund is funded through corporate sponsorship initiatives and supplier agreements. The current balance in the Fund is approximately \$2.8M. Park Board staff are supportive of the abovementioned funding contribution for the following reasons:

- The request aligns with Fund use Criteria C ("to fund one-time expenditures over and above the existing funding levels in the operating budget which are beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system");
- The funds will be used to deliver a free and cultural inclusive public benefit after two years of pandemic disruptions and canceled events; and
- There is a healthy balance in the Fund which can be used to support this valued initiative.

CONCLUSION

The Symphony at Sunset concert event is a collaboration between the Park Board and VSO. This free and inclusive cultural event initiative was first held in 2018 and quickly established itself as a summer season favorite. After a two-year absence due to the pandemic, the Park Board and VSO are preparing to once again host the event in July 2022. Due to higher than anticipated post-pandemic event costs, Park Board staff are seeking Board approval for a contribution of up to \$100,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to support the delivery of the 2022 event. Park Board staff have carefully considered the various aspects of this request and recommend that the Board approve this application as outlined above.

General Manager's Office
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC

Prepared by:
Octavio Silva, Manager of Business Development – Business Services

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