



July 7, 2022

**TO:** Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
**FROM:** General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Indigenous Community-Led Cultural Events - Corporate Sponsorship Fund Request

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## RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve a contribution of up to \$150,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to support the delivery of emergent cultural events led by Indigenous organizations and community.

## REPORT SUMMARY

Since 2016, the Vancouver Park Board has worked to develop positive relationships with Indigenous peoples. In the last 12 months, Park Board staff teams have invested over \$100,000 in unbudgeted funding and provided unanticipated internal operational, technical, and production staff support for the organization of a significant number of Indigenous-led cultural events and ceremonies in parks. The opportunity to do this work continues to grow. Staff are seeking Board approval for up to \$150,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to support emergent Indigenous cultural practice in 2022-2023.

This work, centering Indigenous community voice and foregrounding cultural sensitivity and equity, is in alignment with the Park Board's Reconciliation goals and of direct benefit to urban Indigenous communities. It has provided substantial education for Parks and Recreation as an organization. It is also emergent and therefore unpredictable: challenging for the Park Board's colonial processes and timelines. Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and urban Indigenous families, cultural practitioners and organizations leading this work bring wide-ranging financial and organizational capacity. Park Board processes and procedures can be significant bureaucratic barriers, sometimes causing further harm to communities heavily impacted by colonialism. Staff support must be responsive to the range of needs, timelines, and capacity of the Indigenous families and groups involved in the work.

Financial support of up to \$150,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund would enable Park Board staff to be less reactive in identifying and securing resources. Further, this bridge funding will enable staff to develop a five (5) year plan to bring sustainable support to Indigenous, community-led work through the Parks and Recreation system after analyzing persistent staffing, infrastructure, and financial needs.

## BOARD POLICY & PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- [Park Board Reconciliation Strategies](#) (2016) include the direction to:
  - Work with First Nations peoples and other civic bodies to identify, create, and deliver appropriate and actionable staff training on Indigenous issues and Reconciliation;

- Take a 360 degree approach to programming, including in the areas of culture, health, public dialogue, physical activity, and sport in order to increase public knowledge and awareness of reconciliation and to provide support to Indigenous peoples including children, youth, Elders and families
- Review event permitting and sports hosting opportunities to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected and that, if appropriate to the scale of the event, that local Indigenous communities are engaged;
- [Truth-Telling: Indigenous Perspectives on Working with Municipal Governments](#) (2017)
- [Park Board Reconciliation Mission, Vision & Values](#) (2018)
- [VanPlay Playbook – Implementation Plan](#) (2019)
  - G.6.1 Instill the Mission, Vision & Values of Park Board Reconciliation and Decolonization into the Park Board's organizational culture of learning, respect and truth telling.
  - G.6.6 Ensure partnership agreements and consulting procurements reflect the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and Park Board's Reconciliation and Decolonization values.
  - G.8.4 Create funding mechanisms to support community arts and artists-in-residence that are focused on relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
  - G.8.5 Provide clear decision-making guidance for cultural development, decolonization, expression in parks, prioritization of intangible cultural heritage and promotion of cultural redress.
  - F.2.2 Develop a robust culture of welcome, inclusion, anti-oppression, and truth and reconciliation within the Park Board.
- [Co-Management of Vancouver Parklands with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations](#) (2021)

The Park Board's policy on the approved use of the [Corporate Sponsorship Fund](#) was developed in 1998.

## **BACKGROUND**

As relationships build in community, staff teams from Decolonization, Arts, & Culture; Recreation Services; Park Operations; Special Events & Filming; and Planning & Park Development are supporting Indigenous cultural practices focused on land-based healing, ceremony, and the physical and spiritual restoration of cultural artifacts, in a number of ways. This work provides invaluable opportunities for staff in all areas to further education and understanding on Indigenous Cultural practice and the work of supporting decolonization and Reconciliation in community and on the land. We are grateful to Indigenous artists, cultural practitioners, organizers and communities for their patience and generosity as we learn to do this work.

Park Board has been providing financial support for aspects of this work when the Parks & Recreation system requirements exceed the capacity of event organizers and to ensure that staff are not passing on costs that are a result of colonial thinking/practices, furthering the burden of colonialism. In the past 12 months, this has included providing support for permits, risk management, policing costs, traffic management, and events infrastructure. Each project is

unique and requirements are assessed on a case by case basis. Staff focus on “going the extra mile” to enable safe, well-resourced Indigenous-led events to happen in parks.

The work for Park Board staff includes developing partnerships and facilitating relationship building between community groups and individuals. Park Board provides internal operational, technical and facilitation staff support to reduce barriers to accessing space for healing, connection, and ceremony. Timelines for this work are often short.

Examples of community-led events that Park Board staff supported in 2021-2022 include:

- Powwow Tuesdays and West Coast Wednesdays in Strathcona Park: weekly evenings supporting Indigenous healing, connection, culture and ceremony (June through September) in support of the WCFN and PWT committees, Aboriginal Friendship Centre, and Rumble Theatre;
- Circles Hip Hop Festival: A free, family friendly music festival amplifying Indigenous voices and the empowerment of Indigenous youth music-makers;
- Squamish family ceremony at Xway Xway (known as Lumbermans Arch, Stanley Park);
- Downtown Eastside Powwow in Oppenheimer Park in support of VINES Festival and the urban Indigenous community;
- Park Naming Ceremony at sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 (Rainbow) Park in support of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations;
- Mothers' Day Powwow at Trout Lake Community Centre in support of Mother's Day Powwow Committee;
- Series of engagements and activations at Oppenheimer Park, in support of Art Culture and Community Services, the Carnegie Community Centre Association, WATARI, Atira, Vancouver Moving Theatre, Skundaal Bernie Williams and more;
- Physical and spiritual restoration of the Survivors Pole in Pigeon Park with Skundaal Bernie Williams and Vancouver Moving Theatre.

Unbudgeted financial support for key work to date in 2021-22 includes, and is not limited to:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Financial Support</b>	<b>Audience / Participants</b>
Powwow Tues/West Coast Wed Strathcona Park	\$30,000	6,000
Circles Hip Hop Festival	\$25,000	3,000
Squamish Family Ceremony Xway Xway	\$8,000	400
DTES Powwow	\$3,500	1,000
sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 Park Naming Ceremony	\$20,000	125
Mother's Day Powwow	\$5,000	4,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$91,500</b>	<b>14,525</b>

## **DISCUSSION**

Developing the Park Board's ability to enable Indigenous-led work is an organizational and staff priority. Staff will develop a sustainable plan for 'flexible consistency,' remaining responsive to the needs of unique events and projects while working toward a long-term resourcing plan. Staff's short experience with this work has shown that relationships and capacity evolve over time as initial Park Board support enables capacity building. For example:

- In the summer of 2021, Powwow Tuesdays and West Coast Wednesdays in Strathcona Park required significant Park Board financial support. Staff were able to work with community organizers to receive funding through the City of Vancouver's Communities and Artists Shifting Culture (CASC): Cultural Grants Program to fund the project in summer 2022.
- In the summer of 2021, Park Board brought significant financial support to the Circles Hip Hop Festival. The festival is planned again for 2022, but organizers have since become a not-for-profit organization and launched a record label so have secured funding that will dramatically reduce the need for Park Board financial and staff support.

Staff are challenged to bring a nimble, human, collaborative face to addressing requirements and restrictions of working within City and Park Board systems without engaging in practices that cause harm to communities working to host ceremonies and events on unceded territory. More importantly, staff are engaging with the responsibility of accepting a complex burden of work to support communities rather than placing that burden of work on community in order for them to work with us.

This emergent work exemplifies interdepartmental collaboration for staff, involving nearly every staff team in Parks and Recreation, all working together to enable community.

## **FINANCIAL / OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

This complex, interdepartmental work is not currently funded through any department or program.

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

Projects are assessed on a case by case basis with final funding decisions at the discretion of the General Manager

## **NEXT STEPS**

Decolonization, Arts, and Culture staff will continue to play both a leadership and support role in this cross-departmental work, and will produce a strategic analysis of how to best fund and support emergent Indigenous cultural events moving forward. This analysis will inform the development of a sustainable plan and recommendations for the funding and resources needed to continue this critical work.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Park Board has increasing opportunities to support emergent Indigenous-led projects, events and ceremonies in parks. This work is important to both the relationship building that is foundational to the Board's Reconciliation Mission & Mandate and commitments to Decolonization as articulated in VanPlay. As such, staff are seeking Board approval for up to \$150,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to support this work in 2022-2023.

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