



March 16, 2023

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival – Special Event

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve an application from Trixstar LIVE to host The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival at Brockton Cricket Fields in Stanley Park on Friday, September 15, Saturday, September 16, and Sunday, September 17, 2023, from 5:00 to 11:00pm daily, with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager of the Park Board.
- B. THAT the Park Board approve an application from Trixstar LIVE for a Special Event Permit from the BC Liquor & Cannabis Regulation Branch to serve alcohol at the aforementioned location and dates, with a maximum capacity of 10,000 guests daily.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival is a three-day comedy event initiated in Edmonton in 2021. The Festival will be expanding its current two-city program to five Canadian cities in 2023, including potentially Vancouver. Accordingly, the organizers of the Festival, Trixstar LIVE, are seeking approval to host their Vancouver event at Brockton Cricket Fields in Stanley Park from September 15 to 17, 2023. The purpose of this report is to present The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival initiative to the Park Board, review the event organizer's application to use Brockton Cricket Fields in Stanley Park, and seek the Board's approval for this request.

BOARD AUTHORITY, POLICY, PREVIOUS DECISIONS/UPDATES

Per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over all areas designated as permanent and temporary parks in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within those parks.

As informed by the [Guidelines for Special Events](#), the [Special Events Policy \(2003\)](#), as well as current practices, the Park Board reviews and approves new major special events, as well as significant changes or revisions to existing major special events.

On May 13, 2019, the Board [directed staff to update the aforementioned policy and guidelines](#). Concurrent with this direction, the Board also instructed staff to maintain and support the Park Board's current portfolio of commercial events and activities, but issued a moratorium on the introduction of any new commercial initiatives until after the Special Event Policy & Guidelines have been updated and approved by the Board.

On October 19, 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 Framework provides a succinct method for referencing and implementing VanPlay directions. The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival 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).

On December 5, 2022, the Board [directed staff to lift the moratorium on new commercial event initiatives in Vancouver parks](#), and communicate the decision to the public and the festival and event community.

BACKGROUND

The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival

The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival is a three-day comedy festival initiated in Edmonton in 2021. The Festival returned to Edmonton in 2022 and expanded to Calgary in the same year. In 2023, The Great Outdoor Comedy Festival program will include both cities in Alberta and expand to Kelowna and Halifax. If approved by the Board, 2023 will also be the inaugural year for a Festival in Vancouver.

The vision for the Festival is to create an inclusive and safe experience that celebrates and features all forms of performance comedy, from local talent to star attractions. Past Festival headliners have included Bill Burr, Tom Segura, Amy Schumer, Melissa Villaseñor, Chris Redd, Donnell Rawlings, Chelsea Handler and David Spade.

The Festival also seeks to celebrate and support the communities and beautiful parks where the festivals are held. Over the past two years, the Festival has raised over \$90,000 for various local charities and not-for-profits, while working closely with HireGood (a charity organization that employs people facing barriers to job markets due to homelessness and poverty in Edmonton).

Triostar LIVE

Triostar LIVE is an event management and marketing firm that activates in both urban and rural markets across North America with festivals, concerts, celebrity experiences, brand activations and keynote speaker engagements. The company produces unique experiences and impactful events that generate excitement and everlasting memories while raising funds and awareness for local charities and not-for-profits. Based in Edmonton since 2005, Triostar has produced several major events including GRIT Speaker Series, Together Again Concert Series, Grey Cup Festival, Big Valley Jamboree, and Soundtrack Music Festival.

Festival Location

The Brockton Fields complex is located on the southwest side of Stanley Park, framed by the natural beauty of the Park and with stunning sightlines to the North Shore mountains and the Downtown Vancouver skyline.

Since 2011, Stanley Park's Brockton Fields have hosted a variety of large scale events, including the SeaWheeze Sunset Festival, Vancouver 125, Parks Canada's 100-Year Celebration, Sarah McLachlan's Voices in the Park, and Skookum Music Festival. These initiatives were well received and established Stanley Park as a desirable major event venue, similar to Central Park in New York City, Grant Park in Chicago, and Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

DISCUSSION

Event Proposal

The organizer of The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival, Trixstar LIVE, is seeking approval to deliver a gated and ticketed licensed adult event (19 years of age and over) on Friday, September 15, Saturday, September 16, and Sunday, September 17, 2023, from 5:00pm to 11:00pm daily. The event will include an accessible viewing area, general admission seating area and VIP reserved tables. Capacity for the Festival will be capped at 10,000 guests daily.

Pricing for the event has yet to be finalized but it's estimated that event tickets will be aligned with other Festival locations and be priced between \$69 and \$399 per person. Given that this is a commercial and self-sustaining initiative, the event's ticket fees will be set at price levels required to generate sufficient revenues to offset event delivery costs. All expenses related to the delivery and execution of the Festival will be borne by the event organizer.

A preliminary site plan for the Festival is provided in Appendix A.

Event Set-Up/Tear-Down

Setup for the Festival will begin on Tuesday, September 12, 2023 and continue for three days leading up to the Festival opening on Friday, September 15, 2023. Tear down will take two days after the conclusion of the Festival and be completed by Tuesday, September 19, 2023.

A post-Festival restoration plan for the event site, with expenses to be covered by the organizer, would be implemented to ensure the fields are ready for use by sports user groups after load out.

Compliance with Park Board By-Laws

Consistent with any event taking place in Park Board spaces, the event organizer would be responsible for attendee compliance with applicable Park Board by-laws. Accordingly, a robust plan will be developed and implemented to inform and enforce by-laws.

Key plan elements would include, but not be limited to, advance notification/communications, reminders at gate/bag check locations, on-site signage, regular stage announcements, and Park Ranger oversight. Staff would also work with the organizer's security team, the Vancouver Police Department, and Park Rangers to ensure the plan is delivered successfully.

Transportation Plan

The event organizer will develop a best practice-based transportation plan to reduce impact on the event location and surrounding areas. It is anticipated that this plan will depend heavily on active forms of transportation (e.g. walking, biking, transit, taxi, rideshare, etc.). This plan will be developed in collaboration with the FEST Committee (Festival Expediting Staff Team) and applicable participating agencies.

Event Benefits

Staff recognize that sensitivities and concerns exist when access to public spaces is restricted, and as a result, consider all requests of this nature very carefully. Staff are supportive of pursuing this initiative due to its uniqueness, its marquis nature, and the significant benefits that would accrue to the public, the Park Board, and its partners/stakeholders, including:

- Large scale engagement of residents and visitors through performance comedy;
- Promotion of Vancouver as a destination for tourism, support for long-term economic activity and enhancement of the City's reputation;

- Threading/inclusion of Indigenous representation throughout the Festival (which will recognize the Host Nations of the x^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), s^kwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliiwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) peoples (“MST or Host Nations”)) and the provision of opportunities for Host Nations members and the broader Indigenous community;
- Collaboration and support with existing Stanley Park partners/stakeholders;
- Collaboration and support for local artists; and
- Generating important incremental revenues that can be used to support Vancouver’s parks and recreation system.

Other Important Considerations

Brockton Fields are uniquely situated within a 1,000-acre urban park, making them an ideal venue to host large scale events, where impacts on adjacent areas and stakeholders are minimized. Due to the Festival’s unique characteristics, featuring mostly comedic monologues, noise impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods (including Coal Harbour, the West End, and the North Shore) are expected to be minimal. Any potential concerns pertaining to sound bleed will be addressed and mitigated through the implementation of an appropriate sound management plan. Equally important, the quiet setting of Brockton Cricket Fields will be critical for the successful delivery of the comedy performances, which require an environment largely free from external noise disturbances.

This event proposal has been reviewed by the Stanley Park Intergovernmental Working Group, which includes representatives from x^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), s^kwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliiwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) peoples. No issues of concern were noted or identified through this engagement process. The Festival organizers will continue to work closely with the Host Nations to deliver a series of offerings, which could include:

- Land acknowledgement on website, social media, communication materials, and from the stage on Festival days;
- Display of Indigenous history/storytelling on the Festival grounds;
- Display of Indigenous businesses on website and social media channels;
- Inclusion of Indigenous talent at the Festival;
- Use of Indigenous artwork in the Festival marketing plans;
- Indigenous community partnerships;
- VIP invitations to Indigenous elders and guests; and
- Job opportunities for the Indigenous community through event staff support positions.

Consistent with current practices, the Festival will be subject to a detailed review and a Board report back before future Festivals are scheduled and/or added to the annual Calendar of Major Special Events.

Lastly, the Festival has been endorsed by Destination Vancouver.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to Board approval, Park Board staff will work with both the organizer and FEST Committee members to develop the necessary detailed event plans (traffic & transportation management,

public safety & security, communication, sanitation, etc.) which will be reviewed and approved by staff.

Engagement with Park stakeholders will also be completed by the organizer to ensure the Festival does not negatively impact their operations, while simultaneously leveraging opportunities for joint partnerships and cross-promotional initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Large scale special events activate public spaces, foster community connectedness, and provide enriching cultural experiences. The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival event represents a unique opportunity to showcase a diverse, inclusive and safe experience that celebrates and features all forms of performance comedy from local acts to headline talent. This three-day festival is part of a five-city coast-to-coast tour and a welcome return of live events to Stanley Park with a new and marquis event for the city.

Park Board staff have carefully considered the various aspects of this application and are confident that this initiative can be executed successfully and as intended. Accordingly, staff recommend that the Board approve this application as outlined above.

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Preliminary Site Map – The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival

Proposed GOCF Site Plan

SEPTEMBER 15 to 17, 2023

