



Park Board General Manager's Report February 5, 2024

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

sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 (Rainbow Park) - IAKS 2023 Award

At the festive gala on 24 October 2023, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities (IAKS) presented their much-coveted prize for exemplary sports and leisure architecture.

Vancouver's sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 (Rainbow Park) received an award for Community Outdoor Grounds and Public Areas. Opened in May of 2022, the park continues to garner recognition from international design organizations and local residents alike.

Year In Review

Staff presented an overview of notable events and accomplishments of the Board of Parks and Recreation in 2023. This included:

- Annual Polar Bear Swim at English Bay Beach, which welcomed over 8,000 participants.
- Indoor aquatics increased training opportunities to develop new lifeguards. A new Adapted Aquatic Leader was hired to focus on the provision of adapted swimming lessons and now have adapted lessons at 5 indoor pools.
- Upgrades at the Sunset Ammonia Refrigeration Plant in Summer 2023, provided the Sunset Arena rink and community with a safer and more energy efficient option.
- [West End Waterfront plan](#) engagement process, which brought together community members to have an opportunity to share the future of these public spaces together.
- Promontory Park in East Fraser Lands was opened to the public. The park will serve the rapidly growing neighbourhood and form a vital green space connection from Champlain Heights to the riverfront.
- A new Champlain Heights playground was opened, featuring a play tower, hill slide, in-ground trampoline, water play feature, and plenty of trees and shade.
- Marpole ground breaking Ceremony at Oak Park, where City and Park Board representatives joined partners from the Marpole-Oakridge Community Association and members of the public to launch construction on the project.
- The [Water Priority Action Plan](#) was approved on December 2023 to further guide operational decisions about the use of drinking water in parks and recreation facilities from 2023 to 2028.
- Completion of the second and third phases of engagement to develop the Sport Field Strategy, which is a comprehensive 10-year strategy to guide the maintenance, management, and development of Vancouver's sport fields.
- \$140M in 2023-2026 Capital Plan funding was approved for the construction of a new Vancouver Aquatic Centre.
- The Park Board worked closely with Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services to mitigate the risk of wildfire in Stanley Park.



- The newly formed Sports Field Improvement Group has started the process of improving the safety and playability of the network of citywide sports fields. In 2023, the team completed 18 ball field improvement projects, plus a major full field renovation.
- 27 park sites and 3 golf course were naturalized across the city with pollinator meadows to attract bees, butterflies, and birds.
- Snow and ice control schedule ensured that major park access roads, primary walking areas, and park pathways in the downtown area were maintained during weather events all winter long.
- Supported by the City of Vancouver, Park Rangers have been actively working with vulnerable populations in Vancouver's parks to ensure that while parks can be used by people without housing overnight, they are available for the whole community during the day.
- The pilot to allow alcohol consumption at select breaches in Vancouver ran from June 1 to September 4, and staff are currently reviewing the findings.
- The majority of the temporary Stanley Park bike lane has been removed, following direction from the Board to return Stanley Park Drive to pre-pandemic traffic flow and conditions.
- The Decolonization, Arts, & Culture team celebrated the work of artists and cultural groups working in communities across Vancouver. Park Board funding and staff support have advanced trust and relationship building with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh and Urban Indigenous families and organizations.
- Arts, Culture & Engagement work in 2023 included expansion of the Park Activation Program, cultural work towards the [Local Food Systems Action Plan](#) and Reconciliation education for artists, partners, and Park Board staff.
- A number of Park Board staff have been leading and facilitating cross departmental initiatives and actions to strengthen the relationship between Park Board, City, local First Nations and Urban Indigenous community, community organizations, and others. This includes the Weekly Decolonization Circle, the MST Flag Raising, and the near-complete Colonial Audit.
- The second phase of the City-wide Commemoration Framework engagement has been completed, and Park Board staff have supported Indigenous-led naming opportunities for the Oakridge Development Park, Library, Community Centre, Siwash Rock renaming, and more.
- The Land and Food Systems branch has been supporting local connections with land and food systems in parks to nourish diverse, resilient, and thriving communities and lands.
- Park Board staff were proud to participate in the Vancouver Pride Parade again in Summer 2023. The Park Board works year-round to support and engage with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- The report on the [Think Big revenue strategy](#) was presented to the Board in July 2023, outlining revenue-generating ideas such as increased user fees, improving food and beverage options, sponsorship and advertising opportunities, and establishing a public foundation.



- The Park Board continued to support a number of community events and festivals, including the African Descent Festival, Carnaval del Sol, and the Circles Festival.
- The Park Board once again partnered with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra to host Symphony at Sunset, an open-air concert that took place at Sunset Beach Park.
- Vancouver’s golf operations hosted a range of events, from the Vancouver Open to accessibility tournaments and low-barrier camps for kids.
- The Stanley Park Railway made a triumphant return in 2023, just in time for Bright Nights in Stanley Park.
- VanDusen’s signature Festival of Lights holiday event attracted a record number of guests, with more than 190,000 visitors over the holidays.
- Bloedel Conservatory also saw record attendance in 2023, welcoming nearly 225,000 regular admissions and representing a 24% increase from 2022.

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

Council to receive a presentation on February 7, 2024 titled “Vancouver Parks & Recreation Services: Proposed Governance Transition – Planning Update”.

Board Briefing Memos and Emails: January 22 to February 5, 2024

Date	Topic
February 2	Water Bike Rental Services RFEOI
February 2	Nat Bailey Stadium Facility Improvements