



March 1, 2024

**TO:** Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
**FROM:** General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Non-Motorized Watercraft Launch at Select Beaches - By-Law Amendment

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## RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the proposed amendments to Section 8(d) of the Parks Control By-law as set out in Appendix A, to permanently allow the launch and recovery of non-motorized watercraft at four designated beach locations as outlined this report.
- B. THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward the proposed by-law amendments in Recommendation A for enactment by the Park Board generally in accordance with Appendix A.

## REPORT SUMMARY

This report summarizes the recommendation for a by-law change to the Parks Control By-Law to allow the safe launch and recovery of non-motorized watercraft at designated beach locations on a permanent basis as outlined in the recent [board briefing memo](#) (February 21, 2024). This is based on the successful pilots of the *On Water Non-Motorized Beach Access* as part of the implementation of the [On Water \(2019\)](#), Vancouver's Non-motorized Watercraft Recreation Strategy.

## BOARD AUTHORITY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On June 10, 2019, the Board approved *On Water*, Vancouver's Non-motorized Watercraft Recreation Strategy and endorsed the 10-year Implementation Plan as the basis for submissions to the City's 2023-2032 Capital Strategic Outlook and 2023-2027 Capital Plan processes.

## BACKGROUND

In response to the *On Water* Strategy Action 4.2: "*Consider providing designated launch areas at beaches and parks managed by the Park Board*", staff initiated a pilot in the summer of 2021, to allow non-motorized watercraft to both launch from and return to designated areas within beaches as outlined in a [board briefing memo](#) (May 21, 2021). Four temporary designated launch areas were established and available every day from June 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 11:30am to 8:30pm at 1) [Kitsilano Beach](#) 2) [Spanish Banks East](#) (Locarno) 3) [Spanish Banks West](#) and 4) [Sunset Beach](#).

Components of the pilot project involved new responsibilities for lifeguards including guidance for beach users and the regular placement of Life Saving Federation standard black and white quartered beach flags (moved by lifeguards to high water and low water with the tides). Staff also

arranged for the installation of temporary beach signs, a [website page](#), and social media to inform and educate users and the public about the pilot and locations.

Once the first pilot project was completed, an online survey was launched in October of 2021. In total, 317 responses were received, and the results of this engagement was shared in a [board briefing memo](#) (December 17, 2021) and was overall deemed as being successful from the public's perspective. This led to the pilot being repeated for the summer of 2022, with the same approach and format as the summer of 2021, but with improved signage, and adjustments to the launch area at Spanish Banks East/Locarno Beach.

## **DISCUSSION**

Due to the success of both pilots and the limited impact to park operations, designated beach locations for the launch and recovery of non-motorized watercraft have been repeated every year since 2021. Public feedback has been positive, with no issues reported on the beach, and watercraft users are pleased to see the implementation of the On Water strategy in action. However, a change in the [Parks Control Bylaw](#) (section 8 (d)) is now required to support these changes. Our legal department has drafted the bylaw verbiage which is enclosed in Appendix A.

## **CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS**

Beach users and non-motorized craft users alike have been using the designated launch areas with success. Staff recommend that the Board approve the proposed by-law amendment for enactment to make the launch and recovery permanently allowed.

Following enactment of the proposed by-law changes staff will prepare the necessary signage changes and monitor activity. Staff will report back on the outcomes of this change, as part of a future update on the broader implementation of the On Water strategy.

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**Proposed By-Law**

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**A By-law to Amend the Parks Control By-law  
Regarding Launch and Recovery  
of Non-powered Watercrafts**

THE PARK BOARD OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, in public meeting, enacts as follows:

1. This By-law amends the indicated provisions of the Parks Control By-law.
2. In section 8, the Board strikes out subsection (d) and substitutes the following:  

“(d) No person shall launch or recover a surfboard, windsurfer, canoe, stand-up paddleboard, or any other type of non-powered watercraft on a beach except in areas that are designated for launch and recovery by the General Manager.”.
3. A decision by a court that any part of this By-law is illegal, void, or unenforceable severs that part from this By-law, and is not to affect the balance of this By-law.
4. This By-law is to come into force and take effect on the date of its enactment.

ENACTED by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation this \_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

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Brennan Bastiovanszky, Chair  
Board of Parks and Recreation

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Steve Jackson, General Manager  
Board of Parks and Recreation