



Report Date: April 12, 2024

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-30

[Submit comments to the Board](#)

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
FROM: Director, Business Services  
SUBJECT: Water Bike Rental Service at Vanier Park - Contract Award

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (“Park Board”) authorize staff to negotiate to the satisfaction of the Park Board’s General Manager, the City of Vancouver’s (the “City”) Director of Legal Services, and the City’s Chief Purchasing Official and enter into a contract with BC Water Bikes Ltd., for a water bike rental service at Vanier Park, for a term of 5 years, with the option to extend for two (2) additional one (1) year terms.
- B. THAT the City’s Director of Legal Services, Chief Purchasing Official and Park Board’s General Manager be authorized to execute on behalf of the Park Board the contract contemplated by Recommendation A above.
- C. THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by the Park Board’s adoption of Recommendations A and B above unless and until such contract is executed by the authorized signatories of the City as set out in these Recommendations.

## PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

A water bike rental service was established at Vanier Park in 2017. The service has proved popular and aligns with several key Park Board strategies. With the expiration of the prevailing licence agreement in December 2023, Park Board procurement policy required this service to be put to competitive bid. Accordingly, a Request for Expression of Interest was issued in February 2024 for the continued provision of this water bike rental service at Vanier Park.

The RFEOI was advertised on the City of Vancouver’s website and the work was completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of City and Park Board Procurement Policies. The RFEOI evaluation committee considered the responses received, and on that basis, recommend that the Park Board negotiate and enter into a contract as described above with BC Water Bikes Ltd.

## BOARD AUTHORITY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

As per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over parkland use in the City of Vancouver (including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements within parks) and approves the use of all lands under its jurisdiction on such terms as the Park Board may decide.

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 water bike rental service contemplated in this report 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 January 16, 2023, the Board passed the ["Think Big" Revenue Strategy motion](#) to prioritize and enable opportunities for increased commercial revenues. Subsequently, on July 17, 2023, the Board endorsed the Think Big Action Plan as presented in Appendix A in the ["Think Big" Revenue Strategy – Report Back: July 6, 2023](#), and further validated the preliminary revenue-generating opportunities presented in Appendix D, which included enabling seasonal/temporary park attractions/services and activating public spaces.

## **CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

At a public meeting in May 2017, the Park Board approved the establishment of a seasonal water bike rental service at Vanier Park after a competitive procurement process. The successful proponent, BC Water Bikes Ltd. entered into a two (2) year licence agreement with an option to renew for an additional two (2) years (the option was exercised). Due to the onset of the pandemic, the licence agreement was extended for an additional two (2) years until the end of 2023.

Since the service's inception, thousands of Vancouverites and visitors to the city have embraced the opportunity to enjoy this fun and active experience, which connects them to water and nature. Strong reviews on Google, Tripadvisor and Facebook – 4.9, 5.0 and 5.0 stars, respectively – offer further evidence of the public's satisfaction and appreciation with the water bike concept.

Due to the service's popularity and alignment with key Park Board strategies (VanPlay and On Water), staff are supportive of continuing this service into the future. However, given that the existing licence agreement has expired and no renewal terms remain, Park Board procurement policy required that this opportunity be put to competitive bid. Accordingly, Park Board staff worked with the City's Supply Chain Management department to issue an RFEOI in February 2024 with the objective of identifying potential suppliers with demonstrated experience and capability to operate a high quality water bike rental service over the term of the contract with competitive pricing and excellent service delivery.

## **DISCUSSION**

An RFEOI for a water bike rental service at Vanier Park was issued in February 2024 in accordance with the Park Board's Procurement Policy and distributed directly to interested proponents; notification of the opportunity was also published on the City of Vancouver's website.

One detailed proposal from BC Water Bikes Ltd. (the incumbent service provider) was received and evaluated by a Park Board evaluation team made up of representatives from Commercial Services and Business Development. This evaluation was conducted under the stewardship of Supply Chain Management to ensure the response offered good overall value to the Park Board; both quantitative and qualitative factors were evaluated.

Key criteria considered in the overall evaluation process included:

- Proposed business concept (including approach, service delivery personnel, and innovative ideas);
- Company track record and relevant experience;

- Financial capability; and
- Ability to meet Park Board/City requirements and alignment with Park Board/City sustainability goals.

Based on the overall evaluation, the team concluded that the proposal submitted by BC Water Bikes Ltd. met the Park Board's requirements and provided best overall value. BC Water Bikes Ltd. is a Canadian-owned tourism/hospitality company. The company's principal, Shawn Kennedy, has been active in the tourism/hospitality industry for nearly 20 years and has been nominated in the past for a customer service excellence award through the Vancouver Tourism Awards Program. The company has conducted water bike operations in Vancouver and Victoria over the past decade.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Subject to Board approval, Park Board staff will work with BC Water Bikes Ltd. to finalize the financial terms and conditions in a manner consistent with industry standards and best practice. All expenses related to the delivery and execution of this service will be borne by the service provider; accordingly, there will be no costs to the Park Board related to this initiative. Revenues generated from the provision of this service will be used to support programs and services across Vancouver's parks and recreation system.

### **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Park Board Procurement Policy requires that all contracts, renewals, extensions, and any other forms of commitments and contracts will be on terms and conditions approved by the City Solicitor.

### **CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

A water bike rental service was established at Vanier Park in 2017. The service has been well received since its introduction and thousands of Vancouverites and visitors to the city have taken advantage of the opportunity to enjoy this fun and active experience. With the expiration of the prevailing licence agreement, Park Board procurement policy required this opportunity be put to competitive bid. Park Board staff worked collaboratively with the City of Vancouver's Supply Chain Management team to issue an RFEOI in February 2024 with the objective of identifying a qualified operator to deliver this service in the future.

After completion of the requisite evaluation process, staff recommend that the Park Board negotiate and enter into a five (5) year contract, with the option to extend the contract for an additional two (2) one (1) year terms, with BC Water Bikes Ltd., for the ongoing provision of water bike rental services at Vanier Park.

## APPENDIX A

### Example of BC Water Bikes Equipment



## APPENDIX B

### Service Delivery Area at Vanier Park

