



## Park Board General Manager's Report July 22, 2024

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

### **2024 Meadows Program**

In 2024, 4.6 hectares of new meadows were developed, increasing the total amount of all park meadows to 42.6 hectares. As this program has grown, staff have been working in alignment with Green Infrastructure and Street Horticulture Engineering teams to share knowledge, maps and maintenance guides, cues for care, and processes to improve communication channels in an effort to reduce capacity demands on Operations staff. Staff also negotiated a \$30k credit from Street Horticulture to fund the Healthy Habitats 2024 Meadows work. This collaboration included the development of custom wildflower blends, which featured vibrant long-blooming pollinator mixes that adhered to street planting by-law heights, and Native-only mixes for use in naturalized areas.

In 2025, staff aim to expand the meadows by 1-3 hectares and will continue to find opportunities to share knowledge interdepartmentally and take further steps to collect consistent data. Following the cold snap in January that impacted butterfly counts, staff will be introducing overwintering (no mow) zones and other ecological horticulture practices to help support overwintering invertebrate larva.

### **Riley Park South Playground Renewal**

The south playground at Riley Park was recently upgraded following recommendations outlined in the [2015 Playground Conditions Assessment](#), which classified the playground as a high priority.

The new south playground focuses on play provision for 5–12-year-olds. Improvements include an accessible poured-in-place rubber path, engineered fibre surfacing, belt swings and friendship swing, spinner, parkour climber, playhouse, logs, boulders, and seating. A new zipline was also included due to the popularity of an old zipline and has already been a huge hit with the community. The existing wall climber and fitness equipment were retained, and sections of existing asphalt pathways were remediated to address uneven surfaces. New drainage was also installed as part of the project.

### **Coopers' Park Dog Off-Leash Area Renewal**

The renewal of the dog off-leash area at Coopers' Park is almost complete and will be open to the public in early August. The updated and expanded off-leash area includes a network of accessible footpaths and seating, various play surfaces, and drinking water access for dogs.

The renewed Coopers' Park off-leash area will support year-round use for dog owners in the city. With new fencing, the off-leash area is 1,500sqm larger than the former space and provides protection from cyclists passing on the seawall. A fully enclosed shy dog area is also included as part of the renewal.

### **"Gibby's Field" New Natural Park**

In February 2023, the Park Board approved the concept design for a new park at Gibby's Field. The new park, partially funded by the City's Engineering department and Federal (NIF) grant, features an area rainwater garden, an improved accessible pathway, and natural vegetation.

The park is scheduled to open during the week of July 22, with a launch event to follow in September 2024. The official park naming may be determined at a later date, pending the in-progress decolonized park naming policy.



### **Kitsilano Beach Park Seaside Greenway Improvements**

The Seaside Greenway in and adjacent to Kitsilano Beach Park is one of the most popular sections of our pedestrian and cycling network. It is also one of the only sections of the 28km-long route connecting the Vancouver Convention Center with Spanish Banks that does not currently provide separate pathways for people walking, rolling, and for people riding bicycles.

This September, construction will begin on a separated cycling path through Kitsilano Beach Park, connecting Balsam Street to McNicoll Avenue. Park Development led the design, with City Engineering staff contributing their expertise in active transportation design and construction.

The project construction contract has been awarded to Lafarge Canada Inc. at a value of \$1.1M via the Parks Procurement Efficiency Program. The project is jointly funded by the Government of Canada, the Park Board, and City of Vancouver.

### **VanDusen Learning Garden**

The new Learning Garden at VanDusen Botanical Garden, a collaboration between Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) and the Park Board, is now complete.

This unique space provides an area to deliver hands-on educational programs to learn about plant-pollinator relationships, ethnobotany, food security, biodiversity, and conservation. The garden features accessible raised planters, sensory and vegetable garden beds, seating areas, and accessible pathways.

### **Stanley Park Water Supply Tunnel – Update**

Metro Vancouver is preparing to begin construction on a 1.4km tunnel and new water main under Stanley Park, ensuring reliable delivery of drinking water to Vancouver and Richmond.

Metro Vancouver's Board will vote on the contract award on July 26, 2024. Primary work activities will start in the fall of 2024. The project is anticipated to have a 6-year duration, with most construction activities taking place at the 3 shaft sites (Chilco, Central Yard, Burrard Inlet), and other smaller works happening throughout Stanley Park and Devonian Harbour Park.

Public and media relations will be managed by Metro Vancouver. A detailed communication plan has been developed by Metro Vancouver and reviewed by Park Board and City Communications teams. Potential project impacts, such as construction traffic, along with corresponding mitigation strategies, have been studied and developed by Metro Vancouver in consultation with Park Board staff.

### **Coastal Adaptation Planning – Update**

The Park Board has jurisdiction of over 23 kilometers of coastline in Vancouver, where assets of high social, cultural, and ecological value present challenges for our operating budget. Coastal adaptation planning is currently underway and remains a top priority in the service plan.

Much of our infrastructure was built to outdated standards and is vulnerable to more frequent storm events. Recent storms have resulted in annual repair costs in the \$1-2M range and have required the diversion of hundreds of staff hours from other capital delivery projects. This has also led to the closure of amenities or reduced services levels for park users due to damage and ongoing repair work. Notable examples are Kits Pool, the Stanley Park Seawall, and Jericho Pier.



The Coastal Adaptation Plan for Parks and Beaches is fully funded within the 2023-2026 Capital Plan (~\$2M). Park staff are working with the City's Sustainability group and others to allocate climate adaptation funding and secure grants from senior levels of government.

The first step in the process undertakes a comprehensive assessment of the risk faced by our parks, beaches, seawall, and other assets within the 23km of coastline under park board jurisdiction through a Coastal Hazard and Vulnerability Assessment. The project area is shown here, broken into two Zones. The first in magenta includes coastal parks, beaches and assets that are vulnerable to high severity storm damage including waves. The second in blue covers those that are vulnerable to flooding, such as along the Fraser River, east of the Lions Gate Bridge, and False Creek.

The objectives include mapping current state and hazards to our park system, assessing vulnerabilities, and developing high-level design 'typologies' that will show potential solutions for various coastal conditions (e.g., beach, seawall, etc.). This will inform and streamline future detailed design and implementation work through future procurement processes.

The RFP for the initial Coastal Hazard and Vulnerability Assessment is expected to be issued this summer or early fall and will take approximately one year to complete.

#### **Tatlow and Volunteer Park Steam Restoration**

The stream daylighting project at Tatlow and Volunteer Park was opened to the public on July 3, 2024. The project worked to restore "First Creek", which was buried and lost to history due to colonial practices and urban development.

Park Board staff, with support from the City's Engineering team, daylighted the creek. This project connects the existing stream in Tatlow Park to English Bay and implements sustainable storm-water management strategies to help improve water quality. The project also improves accessible to the beach, creates habitat for bird, aquatic and pollinator species, provides educational opportunities for the community, and provides new amenities including landscaping, pathways and seating.

#### **Alcohol on Beaches – Summer 2024 Re-Pilot**

The Alcohol on Beaches re-pilot launched on July 1. Media and other communication programs are underway to inform the public of the re-pilot, including social media, on-site signage and messaging, radio and print ads.

There have been no significant issues on the beaches to date. Data collection is underway, and an on-site intercept survey will be launching soon, which will include surveying 200 groups at 10 beach locations, including Spanish Banks, Locarno, Jericho, Kitsilano, Sunset, English Bay, Second Beach, Third Beach, New Brighton and John Hendry.

#### **Summer Event Season**

The peak event season for the Park Board's Filming and Special Events Office runs from July 1 to September 3, with 150 special events hosted across 62 parks. These events feature a range of activities, from community farmers markets to larger initiatives such as Carnaval del Sol, KitsFest, and Vancouver Triathlon.

During this peak period, over 500,000 guests and event goers will enjoy our park spaces. These initiatives add vibrancy to public spaces, provide opportunities for Vancouverites to build social connectivity, support local artists, and enable economic benefits like fundraising opportunities for non-profit organizations.



### **Symphony at Sunset**

In addition to hosting many events over the summer, the Park Board also produces the beloved Symphony at Sunset, in collaboration with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO). Concert goers were treated to music from Star Wars, Pirates of the Caribbean and E.T., alongside a selection of classical favorites. The event also featured an arrangement of the Coast Salish Anthem, gifted to the VSO by the grandson of the late chief Dan George.

This year was the most well-attended Symphony at Sunset concert, with over 12,000 spectators.

### **Honda Celebration of Light**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Honda Celebration of Light kicked off on Saturday, July 20. This year's event will feature performances by Portugal, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom, and is expected to draw approximately 150,000 to 250,000 spectators nightly.

### **Home + Away at Empire Fields**

Empire Fields in Hastings Park is now home to a towering new public art installation called Home + Away. Designed by internationally celebrated Seattle artists, Lead Pencil Studio, the playful artwork echoes the historic structures that Hastings Park was once famous for, including the stands of Empire Stadium (1954-1993), and the magnificent, scaffolded ski run that graced the site in the 1950s.

In addition to being visually striking, this artwork is intended to be sat on, ascended and experienced. It provides 16 rows of seating for up to 49 people and offers the exciting experience of height and views, as well as additional spectator seating at Empire Field. The artwork was commissioned and funded through the City of Vancouver's Artist Initiated Public Art Program with the support of the Vancouver Park Board. The new artwork was unveiled in a media ceremony on July 15.

### **New Temporary Public Artwork at Oppenheimer Park**

Park Board Decolonization, Arts & Culture staff attended the Vancouver Nisei Baseball 64th-year Luncheon Celebration at the Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre on June 22, 2024. This event commemorated the three championship years of the Vancouver Nisei Baseball Team in the Vancouver Industrial League from 1951 to 1960. It's a celebration of their resilience, perseverance, and teamwork, as they overcame the challenges of racism, inequities, and post-war injustices.

During speeches, Jay Haraga, Chair of the committee, acknowledged the Vancouver Park Board as a supportive community partner and a significant contributor to the success of the Vancouver Nisei Baseball Team. Park Board staff are working with the committee to install a temporary public art sign on the Baseball Backstop at Oppenheimer Park. The artwork unveiling is planned for mid-September 2024.

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

Council to receive a report on July 23, 2024 titled "[2023-2026 Capital Plan Mid-Term Update](#)", which would approve adjustments to the 2023-2026 Capital Plan, including an adjustment of \$19.4M to the Parks and Public Open Spaces budget.

Council to receive a report on July 23, 2024 titled "[2024 Community Services and Other Social Grants](#)", which would approve a number of funding initiatives, including program enhancements and infrastructure improvements at childcare facilities.



**Board Briefing Memos and Emails: July 8 to July 22, 2024**

Date	Topic
July 22	<a href="#">VanSport Leagues – Update</a>