

MOTION ON NOTICE

For consideration at the Regular Board meeting on September 9, 2024

Revitalizing the Park Board

Submitted by: Commissioner Bastovanszky

WHEREAS

1. The residents of Vancouver have had a democratically elected Park Board for 134 years since 1890;
2. The decision to create an elected Park Board recognizes the special value placed on parks by Vancouver residents;
3. The elected Park Board is a unique public institution that provides Vancouver residents with a degree of public access and input in the future direction of park and recreational services, while providing protection for greenspaces against the pressures of development put on the City Council;
4. The Park Board looks after 250 public parks and beaches, VanDusen Botanical Garden, Bloedel Conservatory and a large public recreation system of community centres, pools, rinks, fitness centres, golf courses, street trees, marinas, sports fields, and playgrounds;
5. The Park Board mission is to provide, preserve, and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit all people, communities, and the environment;
6. Situated on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish Nation, the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), the Park Board recognize the institution's colonial history and upholds a strong commitment to reconciliation and decolonization through greenspaces;
7. The Park Board budget is subject to approval by Council, and since 2009 the Park Board [budget was drastically reduced](#) without subsequent adequate adjustments for increasing costs for operations and capital improvements;
8. The City removed the Park Board's specialized, efficient, and effective maintenance operations and merged the facilities management in 2011-2012 with the City's Real Estate & Facilities Management Department (REFM) that has [resulted in major deferred maintenance](#) deficit of Park Board facilities;
9. A majority of the present City Council is proposing to abolish the elected Park Board without explaining to residents of Vancouver why this is necessary or what will replace it;
10. The majority of Park Board has voted in opposition to the City Council request to the Province of British Columbia to amend the Vancouver Charter to eliminate the Park Board; and

11. The Park Board recognizes the need to revitalize its public mandate to address the growing and evolving needs of the community it serves; and is committed to working with its park partners, Community Centre Associations, Indigenous peoples and the public to modernize current governance structures, finances, and services to meet the recreational needs and expectations of the community and create resilience in the face of future challenges such as climate change.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Park Board adopts the following principles for its future:

- A. The Park Board remains a democratically elected board, directly accountable to the people of Vancouver for a future vision for parks and recreation that is sustainable and inclusive;
- B. The Park Board will work in partnership with the City of Vancouver to secure a new funding formula, improved facilities maintenance and operations management structure, and to reclassify the parks currently listed as "Temporary" to be redesignated as "Permanent" parks, to ensure the financial and operational independence of the elected Park Board and to secure the parks and recreation system for the future;
- C. The Park Board will work with First Nations, the City of Vancouver, Community Centre Associations, park partners, the Province, the Federal Government, and the public to achieve a modernized mandate based on transparency, accountability and a commitment for excellent parks and recreation for the future; and
- D. The Park Board will continue the strong commitment to reconciliation and decolonization by working with First Nations for the stewardship and future preservation of Vancouver's green space, parks and recreation facilities;

FURTHER THAT the Park Board directs staff to develop a collaborative process for broad public consultation with the aim to design and implement a revitalized mandate for an elected Park Board by October 2026.

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