



## **Park Board General Manager's Report January 20, 2025**

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

### **Muncie Booth Retirement**

On November 27, 2024, Muncie Booth, Golf Operator at McCleery Golf Course was honored for his 33-year partnership with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation with a Lifetime Green Fee Pass Award. Muncie was a community leader instrumental in creating opportunities for underprivileged kids to access the game of golf, representing Vancouver Parks Golf for over 30 years, and leaving a positive impact on the community.

The Park Board and Golf Operations team would like to express our thanks to Muncie Booth for his contributions to the organization and community.

### **2025 Polar Bear Swim**

On January 1, 2025, the Park Board celebrated the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polar Bear Swim at English Bay. This year attendance records were broken with an estimate of 28,000 people onsite, including 13,265 registered participants. Growth of the event was due largely to an increase in social media presence and additional resourcing. Our amazing team of lifeguards and staff were onsite to ensure the safe delivery of this growing event.

The event was enhanced with major sponsorship from Destination Vancouver along with Vancouver Hotel Destination Association and community sponsorship from Sleemans, the West End BIA and Native shoes. New features this year included a licensed polar 'beer' lounge along with a costume contest, both were great additions to the event, and staff hope to have them back for future polar bear swims as well.

### **VanDusen Festival of Lights 2024**

VanDusen Festival of Lights celebrated its 40th year and included new lighting displays such as an interactive mycelium installation, salmon run and forest floor, inspired by BC's Great Bear Rainforest. For a second year in a row, Conde Nast Traveller included Festival of Lights as one of the world's best holiday light displays in the world. To top it off, CBC TV aired a live broadcast on New Year's Eve which featured the light show as a beautiful backdrop to kick off the new year.

Unfortunately, the wet winter weather and shorter event run contributed to a 30% decrease in visitation compared to 2023. However, despite the wet weather, many accolades were received from the public on the new lighting elements that reflected the goals of VanDusen as a botanical garden.

### **Bloedel Conservatory Pathway Reconstruction**

Bloedel Conservatory reopened its doors to the public on Saturday, January 4, 2025, following an extensive 2-month pathway reconstruction project. The design upgrades included expanded pathway access and smoother leveled surfaces which have greatly improved accessibility inside the dome, making it easier for visitors in wheelchairs and other mobility aids to experience the Conservatory. Over 900 brand new basalt flagstones were installed within 2700 square feet of pathways and visitors are thrilled with the new and improved look and feel of Bloedel.



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

Council to receive a report on January 21, 2025, titled "[Local Government By-election 2025](#)", which would approve the appointment of the City Clerk at the Chief Election officer for the conduct of a by-election to fill two vacancies on Vancouver City Council arising from Councillor resignations.

Council to receive a report for information on January 22, 2025, titled "[Contract Award for Tree Removal and Associated Services in Stanley Park](#)" regarding the change order with a value of \$3 million awarded by the Bid Committee

Council to consider a motion on January 22, 2025, titled "[Effective Water Use in the City of Vancouver](#)", which would direct staff to report back on opportunities to reduce water usage and increase the installation of water meters throughout Vancouver.

**Board Briefing Memos and Emails: December 9, 2024, to January 20, 2025**

Date	Topic
December 18	<a href="#">Stanley Park Seawall</a>
December 20	<a href="#">Stanley Park Train Update</a>
January 6	<a href="#">Commissioner Liaison Appointments</a>