



MOTION on NOTICE

Submitted at the Regular Board meeting held on September 16, 2025

Think Free Play: Expanding Sports Access in Vancouver Through Self-Service Equipment Stations

SUBMITTED BY: Commissioner Virdi

WHEREAS

1. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation manages and operates over 240 parks, 24 community centres, a network of sports fields, courts, and recreation facilities, serving as the largest provider of free and low-cost recreational opportunities in the city;
2. The Board has long prioritized accessibility, equity, and inclusion, delivering programs that reduce financial barriers to recreation, including the Leisure Access Program for low-income residents;
3. Despite these efforts, many Vancouver residents still face barriers to participation in sport and physical activity, including the cost and storage of equipment;
4. The City of Surrey has recently become the first municipality in North America to introduce free sports equipment lending stations, in partnership with Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities and Equip Sport. The initiative has launched 30 self-service stations across 20+ parks, offering year-round access to equipment such as table tennis sets, soccer balls, basketballs, and fitness gear, at no cost to residents or the municipality;
5. Surrey's initiative is powered by Equip Sport, a Swiss-based company operating more than 400 lending stations across Europe, and fully funded by Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities, a national organization dedicated to removing barriers to children's participation in sport and recreation;
6. By leveraging partnerships, Surrey has demonstrated an innovative, inclusive, and cost-neutral approach to expanding access to recreation and strengthening community connection – an approach that could be adapted for Vancouver's extensive park and recreation system; and
7. Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities and Equip Sport have expressed a strong interest in expanding the free public sports equipment lending program and self-service stations to Vancouver parks and recreation facilities (Letter of Interest appended).



THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation direct staff to work with Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities and Equip Sport to pilot a free sports equipment lending program in Vancouver parks and facilities, modeled after the Surrey initiative, with a report back to the Board following the first year of implementation; and

FURTHER THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation affirm and direct that accessibility, equity, and inclusion be prioritized in this initiative, ensuring that residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can participate in sport without financial or logistical barriers.