



BARD ON THE BEACH PILOT PROGRAM

Report Back

Park Board Committee Meeting
Monday, November 3, 2025



PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

- Report back on the Bard on the Beach Pilot Program
- Opportunity for Commissioners to review, ask questions and provide feedback on this initiative
- Seek Board approval to continue the program in 2025/2026 and conditionally in future years



BOARD AUTHORITY & POLICY

- Per the Vancouver Charter, the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over park land use in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs, activities, fees, and improvements within parks
- Approves the use of all lands under its jurisdiction on such terms as the Park Board may decide



BACKGROUND | Bard on the Beach

- Established in 1990, Bard is Western Canada's largest not-for-profit Shakespeare Festival
- Presented in Sen'ákw/Vanier Park
- Offers Shakespeare plays, related dramas, and special events from June to September
- Welcomed approximately 80,000 guests in 2025



BACKGROUND | Bard on the Beach

- Festival growth/maturity and changes in park use over past 35 years, have daylighted financial and operational challenges
- Bard & Park Board staff working collaboratively to explore solutions for these challenges
- Specific initiative – leaving mainstage arches onsite – approved by Board in October 2024



REPORT BACK | Key Observations

- 2024/2025 Pilot Program was successfully implemented
- Highlights:
 - Park impacts – no significant impacts or damage noted
 - Stakeholder impacts – no issues raised; no enquiries/complaints received during Pilot Program delivery
 - Security impacts – no vandalism or safety issues reported



REPORT BACK | Benefits

- Operational efficiencies – Bard realized important savings in their seasonal setup/teardown activities
- Safety – added lighting to the mainstage arches improved nighttime visibility
- Public access maintained – site remained fully accessible and walkable year-round
- Expanded use potential – program showcased potential for off season use; further exploration underway



PROPOSAL

- Seeking to continue program in 2025/2026, and conditionally in future years
- Future initiatives would be delivered in similar manner to 2024/2025 activities
- Program use period and event benefits would remain largely the same



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Staff will finalize financial terms and conditions with Bard; all program delivery and execution expenses will be borne by Bard
- Revenues generated from this initiative will be used to support Park Board programs and services
- Program is considered low risk given seasonality, no user displacement, and no enquiries or complaints during inaugural year



SUMMARY

- Bard is Western Canada's largest not-for-profit, professional Shakespeare Festival
- Staff identified an immediate Pilot Program opportunity in 2024/2025
- Program executed successfully; organizers interested in continuing the initiative in 2025/2026, and conditionally in future years
- Staff have carefully considered the program; confident initiative can be executed successfully going forward



RECOMMENDATIONS



- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board receive for information the report back on the Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival Pilot Program as outlined in this report.
- B. THAT the Board approve the continuation of the program enabling the Festival's mainstage arches to remain onsite at Sen'ákw/Vanier Park during the event's off-season between November 2025 and March 2026, and conditionally in future years.

