



June 28, 2017

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners
FROM : Donnie Rosa, Director of Recreation
SUBJECT : **Beach Accessibility Improvements**

Dear Commissioners,

This memo is to provide Commissioners an update on planned accessibility improvements at beaches. While staff have been working out the details to address accessibility, the media became aware of our plans and reported out earlier this week.

The Vancouver Park Board has historically provided adapted access to its beaches with beach-designed water wheelchairs and beach mats that can be installed upon request. However, in response to feedback received through VanPlay and VanSplash staff have been working on making improvements to accessibility at beaches.

Currently only two beach-designed water wheelchairs are available for use. The chairs are located at English Bay and Jericho and are booked in advance by residents. The beach-designed water wheelchairs have large tires to negotiate the sand and are light weight, however the user is dependent upon an attendant to access the beach with them.

With two days' notice, the chairs can be delivered to Second, Sunset, Kitsilano, and Spanish Banks beaches. Staff recognize this does not provide sufficient or convenient accessible options across the inventory of beaches and as such will be ordering more chairs to ensure they are available at the noted locations.

Accessible beach mats allow individuals on a wheelchair or scooter, parent with a stroller or individuals who have difficulty walking, independent access onto a beach. Although Park Board currently has some temporary mats available, residents need to request placement in advance as they are installed and removed on a daily basis, making the process inconvenient, unreliable and laborious. As a result, these mats have been used infrequently.

To provide greater access, without the extra steps of pre-arranging, staff have ordered and will be installing accessible beach mats, which will remain in place, at English Bay as a pilot for the 2017 summer season. Mats will be installed from the English Bay Bath House to the high tide line, roughly in line with the location of the elevated lifeguard chair. The mats cannot extend beyond the high tide line as the staking required to secure the mats could have negative environmental impacts on sea life within the intertidal zone. Off-ramps will be installed where people can turn off the main pathway to relax and enjoy the beach.

Delivery and installation of these mats is expected in August; mats will stay in place for the summer season. Over the summer staff will gather feedback on the functionality and maintenance of the accessible beach mats to determine if expansion of the mats to other locations is recommended in 2018.

Regards,



Donnie Rosa
Director of Recreation - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

Copy to: PB Senior Management Team
PB Communications

Appendix A: Proposed location and layout of mats at English Bay.

English Bay - accessible beach mat Seasonal (summer) installation.

Main length = 5' x 160' Wings = 5' x 16.5'



 Mobi Mat Beach Access
 Lifeguard station