

June 2, 2021

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Beach Avenue Parking Lots - Activations & Updates – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the status of the four Park Board parking lots located along English Bay and Sunset Beach, three of which were closed in 2020 when the eastbound lane of Beach Avenue was converted to a temporary bike path to support increased volume on the seawall during the COVID-19 pandemic. This update includes an overview of accessibility improvements, the re-opening of the Jervis Street parking lot, and the temporary pop-up activations that will be installed in the lots at Sunset Beach and Cardero Street. These activations will support summer activities and act as a hub for engagement for the West End Waterfront Master Plan process. All of these temporary operational changes being piloted will be assessed through the West End Waterfront Master Plan engagement and park master planning process.

Background

Since the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Park Board has observed a notable increase in park use, particularly in the waterfront parks in the West End neighbourhood. Significant numbers of people are gathering outside and using park spaces in new ways as COVID-19 public health orders restrict or prohibit many indoor gatherings. Figure 1 below provides examples of some of these informal activities, which include skateboarding, exercise classes, outdoor dancing and many more.



Figure 1: Informal activities observed in the Beach Avenue parking lots (summer of 2020)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Vancouver's Engineering Department implemented a Room 2 Move program providing reallocated road space in response to increased outdoor activity. This included a temporary reallocation of one to two lanes of Beach Avenue for a separate cycling bypass route while dedicating the seawall to pedestrian and rolling uses only.

In response to both a significant increase in use of the facility and public feedback, Engineering developed an interim design with improvements to movement for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians for safety, accessibility, and managing increased demand. The Beach Avenue Interim Design was implemented in April 2021.

Based on collected traffic data, Engineering has observed record volumes of cyclists compared to previous years and also compared to other high use routes around Vancouver. During July and August of 2020, average volumes were approximately 8,000 cyclists per day, which was the highest daily average recorded for any cycling route in Vancouver during pre-pandemic years (see Figure 2 below).

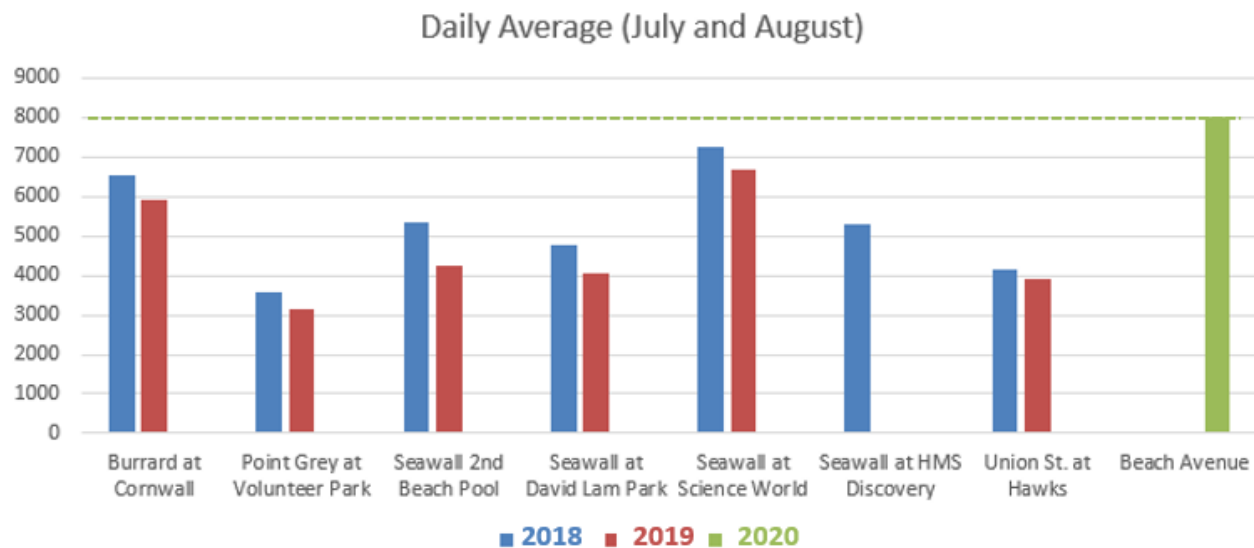


Figure 2: Comparison of seawall cycling route volumes (city-wide) in 2020

Last summer on Saturday, July 5th, peak volumes were experienced on Beach Ave with 12,700 cyclists recorded on that single day. This year, the peak volume recorded so far was on Saturday, April 17th, with 13,900 cyclists in one day. As the summer season draws near, peak volumes are expected to increase and surpass existing records.

Throughout the design phase of the interim bike lane on Beach Ave, Engineering staff have been working closely with Park Board staff to review access and safety at entrances to the parking lots at Sunset Beach Park and English Bay Park. Efforts were made to create safe crossings to allow for parking access to resume where possible. Access into these lots and the potential safety risks have been reviewed and weighed against parking demand, accessibility needs, parking lot size, frequency of use, and other safety considerations. The data and factors assessed included:

- parking occupancy and revenue (as reported in the [Parking Data for Stanley Park & Beach Avenue Board memo](#) dated March 6, 2021);
- feedback from stakeholders, including the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC), and previous barriers to accessibility;
- cycling volumes, engineering requirements, and safety considerations along Beach Ave;
- increased recreational uses and demand from vendors for parking space; and

- support of the West End Waterfront Master Plan onsite engagement activities to take place in the waterfront parks this summer.

Parking Revenue and Occupancy Analysis – West End Waterfront Lots

As shown in Figure 3 below, there are four (4) parking lots included in the West End neighbourhood waterfront study area. They are located at Cardero Street (Inukshuk), Jervis Street, Sunset Beach, and the Aquatic Centre.



Figure 3: Parking lots along Beach Avenue

Based on the parking data for 2017, 2018 and 2019 (pre-pandemic) that was included in the [March 6 Board memo](#), the Aquatic Centre lot (67 stalls) generated the highest revenue, with an annual average of \$156K, followed by the Jervis Street lot (55 stalls) with an average of \$140K per year. The Sunset Beach lot (52 stalls) was the second lowest revenue generator of the four lots, averaging \$73K annually, with the Cardero Street lot (7 stalls) coming in last with an average revenue of \$50K per year.

The Board memo also included information regarding occupancy rates for all four lots. As shown in Table 1 below, the “daily peak” occupancy was calculated for each lot, and averaged for the whole year, as well as just the summer period (June to September).

| Parking Lots – Beach Avenue | 2019 Full Year | 2019 Jun-Sep |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Cardero Street | 123% | 137% |
| Jervis Street | 52% | 71% |
| Sunset Beach | 24% | 30% |
| Aquatic Centre | 37% | 42% |

Table 1: Parking Lot Average Occupancy 2019 – Beach Avenue

Based on these calculations, the Cardero Street parking lot (the smallest lot located by the Inukshuk) has the highest occupancy (least vacancy), with an average of 137% daily occupancy in the summer. The Sunset Beach parking lot has the lowest occupancy (highest vacancy), reaching a peak of 30% average daily occupancy in the summer. In comparison, the Jervis Street lot, which is closest in capacity to the Sunset Beach lot, had a summer daily average peak occupancy of 71%.

Interim Approach for Parking Lots along Beach Avenue (2021)

Based on the above noted considerations, Table 2 below provides a high-level summary of the interim approach being implemented at the four waterfront parking lots along Beach Avenue for this summer season.

| Parking Lot | Public Stalls | Current Status | Details |
|----------------|---------------|--|--|
| Cardero Street | 7 | CLOSED | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remains closed - Mobi station at Jervis Lot to be relocated to this lot - Reserved stalls (7) for Lifeguards and Cactus Club staff to be relocated to the Jervis Lot - Accessible stall (1) to be relocated to Morton Avenue, along with 1 additional stall - Prior status (COVID-19 response) - closed |
| Jervis Street | 55 | OPEN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open (as of May 22, 2021) - Mobi station relocated to the Cardero Street lot - Reserved Cardero St lot stalls to be relocated to this lot (7) - Vehicle entry and exit from east access point only - Prior status (COVID-19 response) - closed |
| Sunset Beach | 52 | OPEN* to accessible & reserved parking only; CLOSED to general parking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reallocation of parking spaces (50 stalls) for a temporary activation/pop-up plaza - Reserved stalls for Park Board and concession staff maintained (5)* - Existing accessible stalls maintained (2)* - Additional accessible stalls added (3)* - Prior status (COVID-19 response) – closed <p style="text-align: right;"><i>*will open once pop-up plaza installation work complete</i></p> |
| Aquatic Centre | 67 | OPEN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remains open (no change to this parking lot) - Prior status (COVID-19 response) - open |

Table 2: Interim Approach for Waterfront Parking Lots - 2021

Following is a detailed overview of the new interim approaches outlined above.

Accessible Parking Improvements

In order to ensure that those with mobility needs still have access to these important destination parks, and to address accessibility barriers previously identified in 2019, staff have worked with CoV Engineering and the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) on an integrated approach to develop a series of improvements to accessible parking for English Bay and Sunset Beach Parks.

Feedback from a meeting with PDAC in November of 2020 noted that the best access to the seawall at Sunset Beach was from the Sunset Beach parking lot as it is at grade with the seawall. As such, additional accessible parking stalls should be focused on that location. As the recently installed accessible beach mat at English Bay is also a key destination for wheelchair users, it is also an important consideration when identifying accessible parking needs.

Based on feedback received through the interim design project, and through further meetings and a recent onsite visit with PDAC, Park Board staff have worked with Engineering staff to relocate and increase accessible parking in an effort to resolve identified issues and improve accessibility.

As outlined in Table 3 below, and as shown in the map in Figure 4, the accessible stalls located between English Bay and Sunset Beach Park will be increased by 4, for a total of 12 accessible stalls, with some relocated to improve access to key amenities.

| Parking Lot | Accessible Stalls | | | Details |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---|
| | Existing | Change | Total | |
| Cardero Street | 1 | -1 | 0 | - Due to steep grades to access beach and less than optimal location of pay station, the 1 accessible parking stall will be relocated to Morton Avenue, along with 1 additional stall |
| Jervis Street | 2 | - | 2 | - 2 existing accessible stalls will remain |
| Sunset Beach | 2 | +3 | 5 | - 2 existing accessible stalls will remain - 3 new accessible stalls will be added to support better seawall access - a ramp to the 2 electric vehicle charging stations will be added to make them accessible (per feedback from PDAC) |
| Aquatic Centre | 3 | - | 3 | - No changes; existing stalls remain open |
| Morton Avenue | - | +2 | 2 | - 2 new accessible spaces added adjacent to Morton Park |
| Total | 8 | +4 | 12 | |

Table 3: Waterfront Accessible Parking Stalls



Figure 4: Waterfront Accessible Parking Map

It should be noted that the two accessible stalls located in the Jervis Street parking lot provide only limited access to the seawall as one pathway is quite steep and the other has stairs. They are accessible for users accessing Beach Avenue (such as cycle wheel users), and for users who wish to use the English Bay lookout on top of the [Metro Vancouver Jervis Pump Station](#), which will include improved accessibility when it is upgraded.

Based on feedback from PDAC, signage will be added to clarify that there is limited accessibility to the seawall from these two stalls. Signage will also be added to the existing sign at the accessible path to English Bay from Beach Avenue to include the slope of the path.

Morton Avenue Accessible Parking

As noted above, the existing stall at Cardero Street parking lot will be relocated to Morton Avenue just north of Morton Park, along with an additional new stall.

In coordination with PDAC, CoV Engineering will be finalizing a detailed plan to install the two new accessible stalls in the additional available road space on Morton Avenue (see Figure # below) to meet all codes and standards and to be fully integrated with the Beach Avenue Interim Design.



Figure 5: Morton Avenue New Accessible Stalls & Beach Access Points

From this new location, access to English Bay and the accessible beach mat will be at grade level, whereas the existing accessible stall at the Cardero parking lot requires beach mat users to go down a steep hill. As well, as shown in Figure 6, the travel distance from Morton Avenue to the accessible beach mat is 70m shorter than from the Cardero lot (230m vs 300m).

In addition to providing improved access to the English Bay seawall and beach mat, these two stalls will provide accessible parking closer to other popular destinations such as the A-maze-ing Laughter sculpture in Morton Park, Denman Street, and the Sylvia Hotel.

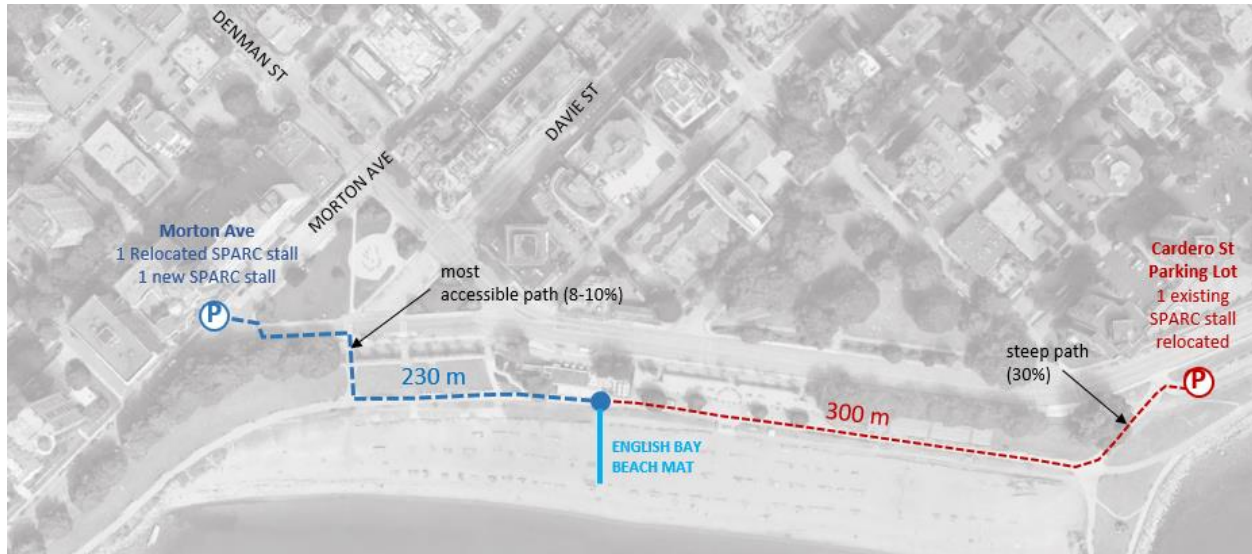


Figure 6: Route from new accessible stalls at Morton Avenue to English Bay Beach Mat

Jervis Street Parking Lot – Interim Approach

The Jervis Street parking lot has re-opened with 51 public general parking stalls, two (2) accessible stalls, and seven (7) reserved stalls relocated from the Cardero lot (see Figure 7). Access to the Jervis lot will be from the east entrance only to support Engineering’s request to ensure safe access for vehicles, safe crossings for cyclists, and to reduce queuing and other challenges on Beach Avenue. The parking lot currently has a two-way access road, so circulation and parking stall access is not affected. Signage will be added for the existing two accessible stalls to confirm that there is limited accessible access to the seawall, as per feedback from PDAC.

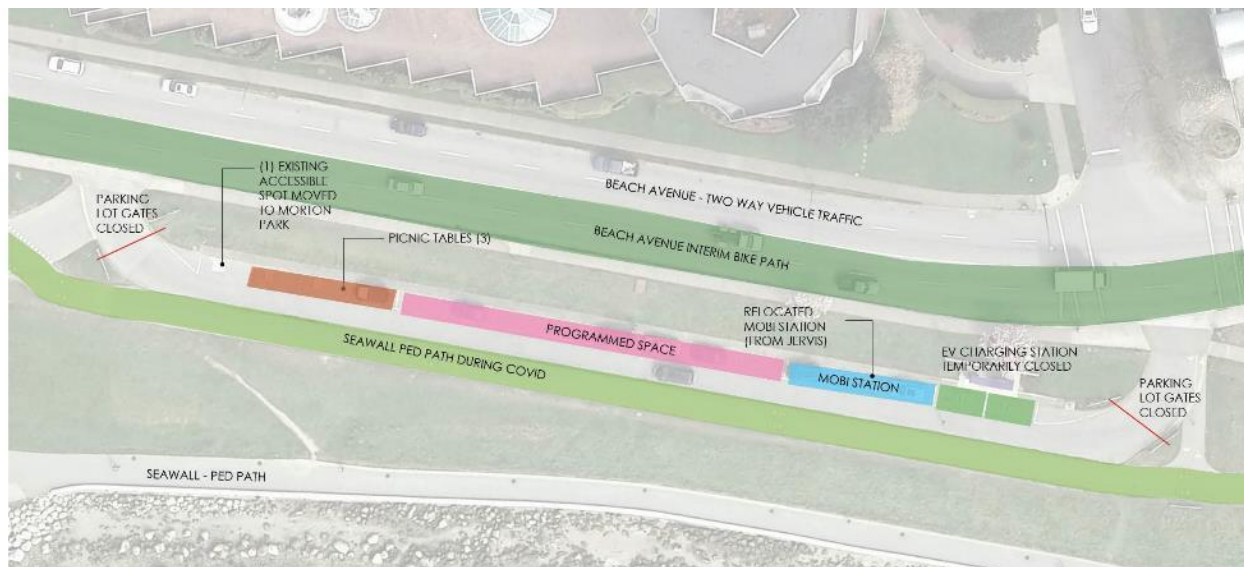


Figure 7: Jervis Parking Lot Changes

Cardero Street Parking Lot – Temporary Pop-up Activation

The Cardero Street parking lot currently has only seven (7) public pay parking stalls. Due to the anticipated queuing lengths on Beach Avenue, the slope of the driveways, and limited sightlines from the exits, this lot will remain closed for now. As noted previously, the reserved stalls at this location will be relocated to the Jervis Street parking lot, and the Mobi station from the Jervis Street parking lot will be relocated to this lot, west of the EV charging station that will remain temporarily closed (see Figure 8 below). Staff are exploring options to provide access to the EV charging station or to relocate it to a nearby alternate location.

With the continued closure of this lot, the parking spaces will be reallocated to facilitate pop-up activations including food trucks and food carts that will be stationed here over the summer months. Three picnic tables will be added for seating and outdoor dining opportunities for users to take advantage of the spectacular views.



NOTE:
ACCESSIBLE STALL (1), LIFEGUARD STALLS (3) & RESERVED
CACTUS CLUB STAFF PARKING (5) RELOCATED TO JERVIS LOT



Figure 8: Cardero Lot – Space Reallocation / Temporary Activation /

Sunset Beach Parking Lot – Partial Re-opening & Temporary Pop-up Activation

As outlined previously, the reserved and accessible parking stalls at the Sunset Beach lot will be re-opened and enhanced for the 2021 summer season. Three (3) new accessible stalls will be added for a total of five (5) accessible stalls in that lot, and new ramps to the EV charging stations will also be installed. General public parking at the Sunset Beach lot will remain closed for now.

With the high demand on West End waterfront parks, and the increased desire for people to be outdoors, this presents an opportune time to create more people-oriented spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy. The closed parking stalls will be reallocated to provide additional space for

people, including families and children, to engage safely in activities already being observed in the area. A temporary pop-up plaza will be installed with picnic tables and umbrellas, beach log seating, ping pong tables (2), and a bright ground mural inspired by the 'sunset' and the cultural vibrancy of the West End. See Figures 9 & 10 below for the Temporary Pop-Up Plaza Layout Plan and Conceptual Rendering.

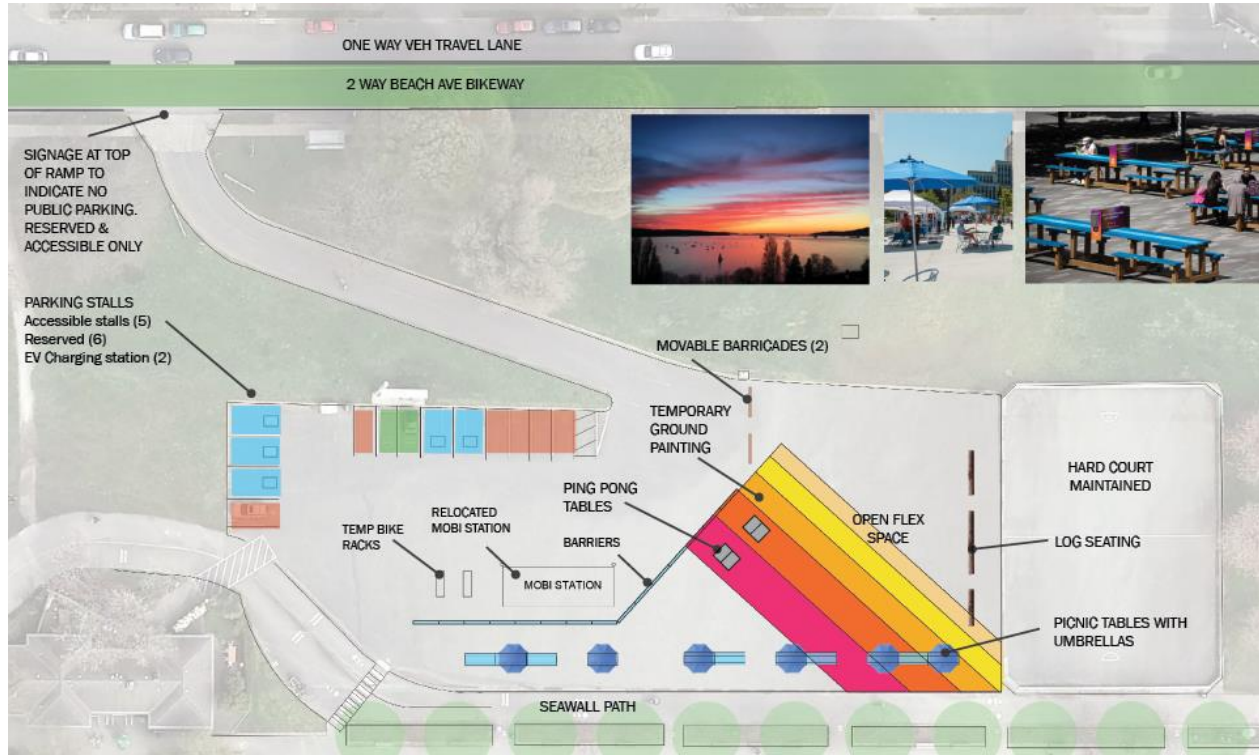


Figure 9: Layout Plan of the Sunset Beach Pop-Up Plaza



Figure 10: Conceptual Rendering of the Sunset Beach Temporary Pop-Up Plaza



Food trucks and/or food carts will be stationed in the pop-up plaza throughout the summer and a bike valet service will operate on weekends. All food services will be coordinated through Park Board staff to ensure compatibility with the existing concession stand food and beverage services being offered.

Work on the Sunset Beach pop-up plaza is already underway and it is expected it will be ready to open by June 13th. This pop-up plaza will create an exciting place for outdoor activities and will support the important ongoing work of the [West End Waterfront Master Plan](#) by providing a hub for public engagement activities over the summer

Summary

As the community recovers from the COVID-19 global pandemic, enhancing outdoor spaces will provide people with healthy, social, and safe environments to reconnect with Vancouver parks and with each other. All of the operational changes being piloted this summer will be assessed through the West End Waterfront Master Plan engagement and park master planning process. Staff will continue to monitor usage of these areas and activations, and will update the Board on the project as work progresses.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donnie Rosa".

Donnie Rosa (*she/they*)

General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/ml/ed/dh/clc

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team
Planning & Park Development
PB Communications