



May 13, 2022

MEMO TO : Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners
FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT : **Broadway Plan - Parks and Recreation Interests – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the key interests and concerns from a parks and recreation perspective regarding the [Broadway Plan report](#), which will be presented to City Council on May 18, 2022.

The following sections of the proposed [Broadway Plan \(Appendix A\)](#) are particularly relevant to the Park Board:

- [Built Form and Site Design: Solar Access \(p.281\)](#)
- [Community Well-Being Policies: 16.3 Community Centers \(p.420\)](#)
- [Public Benefits Strategy Directions: 21.3 Parks and Open Space \(p.470\)](#)
- [Public Benefits Strategy Directions: 21.5 Community Facilities: Recreation Facilities \(p.475\)](#)

Overview

The Broadway Plan is a comprehensive land use policy plan that will guide growth and change in Kitsilano, Fairview and Mount Pleasant neighbourhoods over the next 30 years and encompasses an area of the city comprised of 485 city blocks or 860ha. The City of Vancouver's Planning Department is leading the development of the Plan. The Plan includes a Public Benefits Strategy to direct City investment in public amenities and infrastructure to support the delivery of services for potentially an additional 50,000 residents and 40,000 jobs.

The Plan advances [VanPlay's Bold Move 3: Connectivity](#) through a high-level public realm framework that reimagines public spaces as multi-functional and adaptable, capable of supporting ecological functions and community needs. The reallocation of road space into new greenways and blue-green systems connects parks, community centres and waterfronts, and brings nature closer to residents.

However, based on an assessment by Park Board staff, the Plan does not address the serious deficit in the provision of parkland and community centre space for the existing population, nor does it adequately meet the demand for the future population. It also does not go far enough to protect sunlight in parks in the late afternoon in the spring and fall when direct sunshine is most needed to be comfortable outdoors. These components of municipal infrastructure (parks and recreation) and physical requirements (sunlight) are critical to the livability of current and future communities in the Broadway area.

Park Provision

The average amount of existing park space in the Broadway area is very low at 0.33ha/1000 residents, within a 10min walk, compared to a provision level of 0.49ha/1000 residents in downtown Vancouver, excluding Stanley Park. Park provision is even lower in the Fairview and Mount Pleasant neighbourhoods of the plan.



Given that the Broadway area is envisioned as a second downtown, Park Board staff recommended that the park provision target be based on the existing Downtown provision of 0.49ha/1000 people. In recognition of the built-up nature of the Broadway area, staff further reduced the target to 0.38ha/1000 people, which is equivalent to 13ha of new parkland (or 5 new neighbourhood parks) in the Broadway Plan area over the next 30 years.

Ultimately, neither a target for park provision nor locations for future parks were identified in the proposed Broadway Plan.

Community Centre Provision

The current community centre provision for the Broadway area is 0.78 square feet per resident. Based on the needs assessment for the study area, staff recommended a target of 1 square foot per resident, which is equivalent to an additional 70,000 square feet of community centre space in or near the Broadway area. This could be achieved by expanding an existing community centre and building a new facility similar to Mount Pleasant Community Centre (approximately 31,000 square feet), which is co-located with other social and cultural amenities.

The recommended target is in line with [VanPlay's 2040 asset target](#) to “maintain the current citywide average of 1.2 square feet of community centre space per person (excluding rinks and pools).”

Policy 16.3.2 in the Plan states the intent to “explore opportunities to expand community centre capacity in or within proximity to Broadway” and the Public Benefits Strategy commits \$10M to the “early planning and design work for community centre renewal and expansion within or near Broadway”.

The expansion of an existing community centre will not be sufficient to serve the projected population over the next 30 years, and will lead to a decrease in livability and equity in area.

Protection of Solar Access in Parks

Sunshine is a fundamental building block of Vancouver parks -- sun allows for photosynthesis in plants (absorption of carbon dioxide and production of oxygen) and is essential for human health, particularly in Vancouver's rainforest climate. Heavy use of park spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the fact that public parks are an essential piece of health and well-being infrastructure.

The taller forms of housing proposed in the Broadway Plan will have limited outdoor space, such as gardens and patios. The Plan's direction on solar access will have long lasting impacts on the livability of these neighbourhoods and the wellbeing of residents.

Under the Broadway Plan, solar access caused 'by new development should not create new shadow impact on parks and public school yards from the spring to fall equinoxes between 10AM and 4PM' with exceptions to allow for shadowing within the 10am to 4pm window for social housing, 100% non-market developments, and the Vancouver Community College.

The incremental shading of existing parks by new developments in the late afternoon will impact the time period when individuals seek outdoor time, access to nature, exercise after work, and when families and friends socialize. In 2017, the City gathered data during the [Places for People](#)



[Downtown](#) Public Space Strategy that shows recreation and cultural activities increase in public spaces from 4pm to 6pm. Other major cities such as Toronto and Sydney are protecting solar access in select public spaces up to 6pm.

With more park users expected in the Broadway area, and a limited number of new parks, existing parks will be expected to “work harder” to serve the existing and future populations. Protecting solar access in parks up to 6pm would help extend use into the evening, especially in the cooler spring and fall seasons.

Conclusion

This information is intended to highlight the significance of the Broadway Plan in setting the direction for the future, and how it will impact the delivery of new parks and community centre services in a densifying area of the city. The livability of the future Broadway area is dependent on the provision of adequate parks and recreation services, and the protection of access to sunlight.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Donnie Rosa". The signature is somewhat stylized and scribbled.

Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)
General Manager - Parks and Recreation

jn/cg/clc

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
PB Planning, Policy & Environment team
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