



December 19, 2019

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Malcolm Bromley  
General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Washroom Strategy Update – Board Briefing Memo**

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Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the Park Board's system-wide Washroom Strategy, which was launched in 2018 as a collaborative effort between Park Board staff and City of Vancouver staff across many departments.

As outlined in a Board Briefing Memo dated May 18, 2018 (attached), staff commenced a system-wide park washroom strategy in 2018. The vision of the Washroom Strategy is "to develop a long-term plan for the provision of safe, clean and accessible washroom facilities to enable and enhance park experience for all".

This strategy will help achieve the VanPlay 2040 Asset Target for Washrooms, which includes the goal of adding a washroom facility near every destination playground, sports field, water recreation access point, community garden, and other strategic locations to enhance connectivity, with an additional goal for 70-80% of these washrooms to be in good condition or better. A detailed description of washroom asset needs and other considerations can be found in [VanPlay- Strategic Bold Moves](#) (page 75).

### **Current State**

The Park Board is the main provider of public washrooms in Vancouver, with facilities at beaches and in Stanley Park visited by thousands of people on summer days. Additionally, due to the limited availability of other resources, increasing numbers of homeless people now rely heavily upon park washrooms throughout the year.

The majority of park washrooms were built between 1960 and 1970. Due to deteriorating building conditions and current accessibility standards, many of these facilities are in need of upgrades. As well, the increasing and changing use of these facilities has had a significant impact on this already stressed infrastructure. Capital and operations funding to renovate washrooms has not kept up with these demands.

### **Engagement Work**

Engagement data collected through VanPlay and other planning and park development projects as well as from 3-1-1, helped to outline the main issues with washrooms in parks. It was clear from analyzing this data that improving availability and cleanliness of washrooms is a high community priority and would help reduce barriers to accessing parks and recreation.

Feedback is also being collected from a number of ongoing staff working groups and initiatives including: the Beach Experience Team; Mayor's Overdose Emergency Task Force; Team UP; Community Parks Stewardship Pilot Program; and the Universal and Inclusive Design Feasibility Study.



Additionally, staff have recently met with the Seniors Advisory Committee; Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee; Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee; and the LGBTQ2+ Steering Committee. Staff will also continue to liaise with external stakeholders such as the Vancouver Field Sports Federation, Vancouver Coastal Health, and TransLink.

### Strategy Deliverables

To identify the function, type, and scale of park washrooms, a “Washroom Types Framework” has been drafted with all existing facilities and proposed locations assigned a type. The washroom types are based on activities, park experiences, and the intensity of use.

The proposed strategy will include a prioritized list of possible renovations and new washrooms, developed based on criteria that include the following considerations:

- contribution towards meeting the VanPlay Asset Target (e.g., does it serve a destination playground, sports field, water recreation access point, or community garden);
- is the location within an Equity Initiative Zone;
- contribution towards enhancing city-wide connectivity for all ages and abilities;
- building condition;
- safety and accessibility; and
- known demand (e.g. destination parks).

Understanding that planning, designing and building washrooms takes time, the strategy will also include short-term opportunities to address some of the immediate challenges associated with washrooms.

### Next Steps

In addition to including the above deliverables, the engagement feedback and learnings from other municipalities will help inform the proposed Washroom Strategy. Staff plan on presenting this strategy to the Board for approval in early 2020. In the meantime, in response to the regular feedback received regarding park washrooms, work will continue on improving and maintaining existing facilities.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malcolm Bromley".

Malcolm Bromley  
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

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Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team  
Planning, Policy & Environment  
PB Communications