

From the Chair & General Manager

Our Mission: Provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit people, communities and the environment.

In 2008, the Vancouver Park Board continued to enrich the lives of Vancouver's residents. We expanded community facilities and upgraded parks, actively sought ideas from residents, celebrated the diversity of our city, launched new recreation and arts programs, developed new business initiatives, supported active living and expanded our environmental work.

Guided by our elected Board of Commissioners, staff managed the largest capital project plan ever and also met our commitments to the City and VANOC to prepare for the 2010 Winter Games.

The many accomplishments would not have been possible without the contributions of partners, stakeholders and volunteers, hard work and enthusiasm of employees, and involvement of the public.

In keeping with our pledge to be a more sustainable organization, we changed our annual report's format from the more traditional publication to the newspaper insert you see here. Please take the time to read it and learn about some of the services that support you, your family and this great city we call home.

Park Board Commissioners



Loretta Woodcock Vice-Chair Constance Barnes Sarah Blyth



Aaron Jasper Stuart MacKinnon Ian Robertson



Raj Hundal
Chair



Susan Mundick
General Manager



Go Swim — It's Fun, Affordable and Accessible!

Second Beach Pool, Stanley Park

Working for Residents Every Day

For 121 years, the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (more commonly known as the Park Board) has been building and maintaining a public parks and recreation system that is the envy of the world. In 1888, we began with one, now world famous green space - Stanley Park - and today we have over 220 parks. Our first community centre opened in 1950 – in Marpole. Now there are 23 centres, one within 3.5 km of every doorstep in the city. Our work touches the lives of residents every day. No matter what age, ability, culture, interest or income, most Vancouverites use and enjoy our programs and services in their own neighborhood or across town. We are the champion of personal and community well being and are a big part of Vancouver being one of the most livable cities. Our commitment is to continuously improve on our efforts to deliver quality parks and recreation programs, accommodate growth, and adapt to Vancouver's ever changing needs.

Nearly 900 full time and 1,500 part time/auxiliary employees make up the Park Board staff team. We develop and lead innovative leisure programs like wheelchair dancing and stroller bootcamp. We cut the grass and pick up the litter from our parks, plant the spring bulbs and grow the annuals in our display gardens and prune the street trees. We guard the beaches, keep the pools clean and serve as ambassadors in our parks. We freeze the ice rinks, design and build new parks, install playgrounds and maintain the community centres. And much more!

We are responsible for

People: leisure and sports activities, education and instruction, arts and culture, children, youth and seniors programs, ensuring availability and accessibility

Places: community centres, ice rinks, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, fitness centres, restaurants and concessions, marinas, club houses and field houses, Children's Farmyard and Miniature Train

Parks: destination and neighborhood parks, VanDusen Botanical Garden, Bloedel Floral Conservatory, woodlands and trails, beaches, public gardens, playgrounds, sports fields and courts, golf courses, street trees and urban wildlife



Special Project: Stanley Park Restoration**From Crisis to Opportunity**

"We are helping to foster conditions in the park for a healthy, diverse forest. It's exciting to watch the speed at which Nature is so enthusiastically helping to achieve those changes!" - Bill S., Urban Forestry Technician

On December 15, 2006, the gale force winds that leveled more than 10,000 trees in Vancouver's beloved Stanley Park left destruction that had not been seen in the park for more than four decades. But two years later, the ambitious and challenging restoration of Vancouver's first, largest and most popular park has been completed. Intensive work by dedicated Park Board staff across many disciplines assisted by a large group of consultants, contractors, volunteers, donors and the media have now brought recovery and renewal of the city's 'evergreen heart'. From the crisis of the wind storm came a golden opportunity to make the majestic coastal forest more resilient for the future - stronger and more balanced. More than \$10.5 million has been raised from corporations, individuals and governments to pay for the restoration, demonstrating the massive public support for the project. Activities in 2008 included:

- 15,000 new trees and shrubs planted in the blow down areas
- Road realignment and landscaping completed at Prospect Point
- Structural upgrades made to the Seawall
- Slope stabilization completed between Prospect Point and Third Beach
- Fallen trees removed and distributed
- Upgrades completed to Siwash Trail
- Significant progress on invasive plant removal
- Reopening of the historic lookout above Siwash Rock
- A long term forest management plan developed



Part of the legacy of the Stanley Park storm has been to give fallen trees to local First Nation groups and artists. One of park's magnificent cedars has been given new life as a traditional canoe by students at Britannia Secondary School.

AWARD :: In 2008, the innovative Stanley Park Restoration Project received widespread recognition

- British Columbia Parks and Recreation Association Award for innovation and Ingenuity
- Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Stewardship Award
- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association Excellence and Innovation Award

Infrastructure Renewal: Stunning Facilities**Sunset Moves to Main Street**

"The new centre is a magnet for local kids who come for a game of pick up basketball, or to work on a video project or plan a special event. There's always something new and exciting going on." Paul C., Youth Worker

After more than fifty years on 51st Avenue, the Sunset Community Centre boldly moved two blocks east to its new home on Main Street, closer to the heart of this busy, vibrant neighborhood. The replacement and relocation of one of Vancouver's oldest community centres was a joint project between the Park Board, the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver and the Sunset Community Association. The beautiful new facility has proven extremely popular with local residents - program registrations immediately jumped over 40%. The dramatic building, built at a cost of \$12 million, was officially opened in April 2008. It features a uniquely curved roofline resembling a five-petal flower; the roof's design is echoed in the gentle knolls of the surrounding green space. Many energy saving, sustainable features were incorporated into the 'green' facility, including a geothermal heating and cooling system and radiant floor heating.



The abundant use of glass at Sunset created an open, light-filled interior with major spaces for recreation and leisure.

AWARD :: The new Sunset Community Centre was awarded the British Columbia Ready Mixed Concrete Association CONNIE Awards (Grand and Tilt Up) for excellence in concrete construction.

More and Better Parks Meet Community Needs**Redevelopment Transforms Nelson Park**

"Kids rolling in the grass, families picnicking, dog owners chatting, people digging in the community garden, strangers talking to one another—the new Nelson Park draws us all together!" Linda L., West End resident

A lively mix of kids, dogs, gardeners, seniors and others came together to celebrate a green oasis in the centre of the busy West End when the newly renovated Nelson Park opened in June 2008. The 1.2 hectare (3 acre) park, developed with the community's input over a three year period, has given the neighborhood a much improved and useable space for both active and more passive pursuits. While retaining much of the character of the original park design, the plan includes new entryways and paths, and an inviting children's playground along side a seating area defined by metal arbours and framed by colourful garden beds. A new 2,000 square metre off-leash dog area is enclosed by decorative fencing and a large community garden has proved popular with local residents and school students alike. As part of its commitment to sustainable construction practices, the Park Board retained, amended and reused the soil in the park, and recycled granite from the old field house for the new water feature.



Nelson Park is an example of the Park Board's commitment to engage residents in discussions about projects that impact their communities. Fourteen such public consultations were held in 2008 for park and facility development.

PARK BOARD BY THE NUMBERS

DID YOU KNOW the Stanley Park Seawall was originally started in 1917 to reduce shoreline erosion? Built in bits and pieces, it was completed in 1980.

DID YOU KNOW that Vancouver's street trees are inspected annually and pruned (if needed) every 7 years?

DID YOU KNOW that there are 32 dog off-leash areas in Vancouver parks? Seven provide ocean or lake access for dogs.

DID YOU KNOW staff release 5.5 million ladybugs into our parks and street trees every year to reduce aphid infestations?

• 20 heritage buildings
• 15 food concessions
• 10 restaurants in parks

• 223 parks covering 11% of the city
• 23 community centres

• 195 playing fields and sports courts
• 154 playgrounds

• 180 tennis courts
• 11 beaches
• 2 marinas

• 9 indoor and 5 outdoor pools
• 8 ice rinks

• 6 skateboard parks
• 24 fitness centres
• 135,000 street trees worth more than \$500 m.

Climate Change and Conservation

Frog Takes Leap to a Greener Future

"My 12 year old, who has seen Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth', asked me 'what are you doing to save my planet?' I said I was working hard to reduce emissions, but turning off the lights at home is part of the solution too!"
 Ian H., Supervisor of Maintenance Management

In 2008, the Park Board's commitment to be an environmental leader and advocate took on a new profile and a new mascot with the launch of an \$8.6 million program to reduce green house gas (GHG) emissions at our facilities. Identified in the City's Corporate Climate Change Action Plan as a very large energy consumer, the Park Board was given the challenging target of cutting GHG 20% by 2010 – approximately 2/3 of the City's entire energy reduction goal. Last year, half of this target was achieved through upgrades to heating, lighting, hot water and control systems at 30 facilities – community centres, pools, rinks and golf courses as well as service yards and offices. The result: CO2 emissions have already been reduced by 1,088 tonnes, the equivalent of 209 cars off the road for a year or enough electricity to power 100 homes. To help tell the important story, the Park Board engaged the services of one of our very own park animals – a frog! Chosen as a familiar and playful symbol of the natural world, but one that is particularly susceptible to the effects of climate change, the amphibian was selected for the new Green Like Me information campaign for residents and staff.



Solar panels in the roof of Templeton Park pool will reduce GHG emissions - equal to 882 fill ups (40 litre per fill up) at the gas station.

Vancouver Sport Strategy

Charting a Course for Life Long Sport

"Participation in sport, as in arts and culture, creates a family that extends beyond coaching, officiating, administering and participation. It creates a home to belong to for the rest of your life. Sport helps create citizens of our City."
 Simon L., Infrastructure Committee Chair

A dynamic and forward-looking policy to realize the true value of sport in our community became a reality in 2008 when the City and the Park Board approved the Vancouver Sport Strategy. Led by the Park Board and involving many agencies and individuals dedicated to ensuring that sport is enjoyed at all levels, the new approach is based on the Canada Sport for Life model. It provides a future roadmap for quality sport programming, facilities and events - whether it is about developing basic skills for children, encouraging teens to be active through organized sports, or guiding competitive success for adult athletes. The strategy acknowledges the important role that sport, recreation and physical activity play together in health and wellness, inclusiveness and community building throughout our lives, and recognizes Vancouver as a premier sports destination. The first annual Sport Summit brought together more than 20 associations and organizations representing thousands of participants of all ages and abilities.



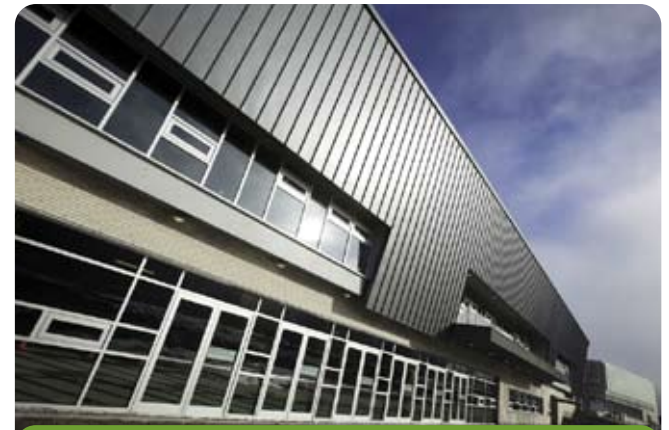
The Vancouver Sport Strategy is the new framework for more opportunities in sport involvement and leadership.

From 2010 Winter Games to Community Legacies

Building the Venues of Tomorrow

"Vancouver Curling Club members are excited to have a new home in the Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre. The club's 100th anniversary will kick-off with the delivery of the very first stones of the 2011-2012 season... a great way to celebrate the future of curling in Vancouver!" Scott A., President

The countdown is on! As a partner with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC), the Park Board continued to work virtually non-stop in 2008 to maximize the many opportunities and benefits from the Games. We built venues, engaged residents and delivered on many projects to 'welcome the world'. Construction continued on four outstanding facilities that will become much needed community recreation legacies after the Games leave town. The spectacular Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre in Hillcrest Park, home of competition curling and wheelchair curling events, was completed at year end. Also completed are two stunning new ice rinks: Killarney (training venue for short track speed skating) with its wing-like roof line joining the existing centre, and Trout Lake (training venue for figure skating) with its dramatic arched roof and use of downed Stanley Park timbers. The new state-of-the-art waterfront community centre in Southeast False Creek is nearing completion and will be the heart of the Olympic/Paralympic Village Vancouver.



Post 2010, the signature Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre will be converted to a city-wide recreation complex with a new community centre, ice rink, curling club, library, field house and offices. Being built at the same time is a new aquatic centre, the largest in the city, with indoor and outdoor pools.

RESIDENTS—ACTIVE AND INVOLVED IN 2008!

- more than 5.4 million visits were made to the Park Board's 23 community centres
- swimming pool admissions topped 1.95 million
- over 3.4 million visits to the beaches were recorded
- more than 270,000 rounds of golf and pitch & putt were played
- skating rink admissions topped 760,000
- over 40,600 people registered for swim classes at our pools
- more than 2,400 permits were issued for field sports, rink events, picnics and other special events in parks
- over 6,000 volunteers work each year in Vancouver's parks and recreation system

Give me R-E-S-P-E-C-T

The power of recreation to teach positive values was on full display when the Park Board hosted the June 2008 national launch of the new Play it Fair toolkit. The innovative educational program promotes human rights and helps children aged 6 to 12 years learn about respect, responsibility, cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution, as well as fight racism, cliques and bullying. Play it Fair, with its more than 60 interactive activities and games, has since been put in place in each of the summer day camps offered around the city by the Park Board and its community association partners.



Art in the Park

The arts in everyday life is an essential element of a vital, creative and balanced city. This Park Board priority was given a major boost last summer when three spectacular pieces of public art were unveiled in Stanley Park. A collaborative project with the City's Public Art Program, Coast Salish Arts, Vancouver Storyscapes and the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, the intricate carvings by prominent artist Susan Point are a tribute to the traditional Coast Salish peoples of the area. The red cedar welcome gateways, entitled People Amongst the People, now proudly stand beside the iconic Brockton Point Totem Poles, one of the most visited attractions in one of the great parks of the world.



Walk the Talk

For those looking for fewer excuses and more inspiration to crank up their sedentary lifestyles, the Park Board's popular Active Communities Vancouver program gave plenty of fresh new ideas in 2008 to "Step it Up 20%". Five new walks were developed around 2010 Winter Games venues at False Creek, Hastings Park & Coliseum, Hillcrest and Queen Elizabeth Park, and Killarney and Trout Lake arenas. These measured routes come complete with maps, calorie and step counts and walking tips. They are part of the new Walking to Wellness Passport, which challenges residents to get moving and feel better by walking 100 km in 12 weeks.



AWARD :: Vancouver was honoured by the Canadian Federation of Podiatric Medicine with the Most Walkable City in Canada Award as a model of safe, accessible and practical urban walking networks that encourage residents to walk as part of their daily life.



PARKS AND RECREATION: GOOD FOR YOU!

Vancouver residents enjoy our services all the way through their lives. Park Board programs connect neighbours, improve the natural landscape and keep our city beautiful.

The benefits are endless!

Personal – fun and entertainment, exercise and fitness, relaxation and stress reduction, new skills and hobbies, illness prevention.

The result = active, healthy lifestyles

Social – getting to know people, participating in groups, building community spirit, creating strong families, supporting individuals, producing leaders, balancing busy lives.

The result = more shared experiences

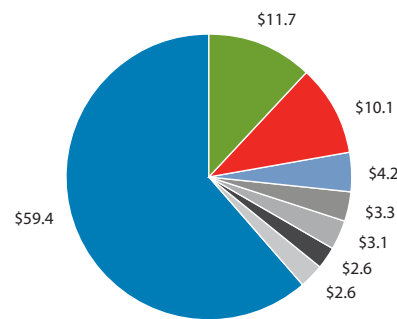
Environmental – protection and promotion of nature and biodiversity, enjoying the outdoors, improving air and water quality, energy conservation, long term sustainable practices and policies.

The result = an improved urban ecology

Economic – increased property values, employment and training opportunities, investment and capital development, community revitalization, tourism support.

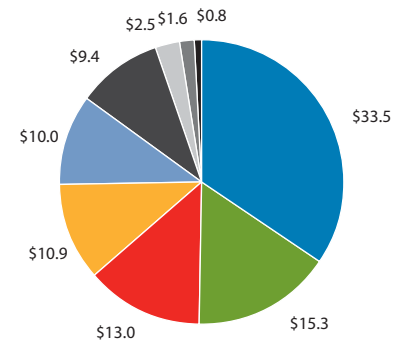
The result = a better quality of life

Operating Budget 2008



WHERE OUR MONEY CAME FROM (in millions)

Community Centres, Pools, Rinks, Fitness	\$11.7
Golf Courses (including Pitch & Putt)	10.1
Parking	4.2
Concessions	3.3
Stanley Park, VanDusen, Bloedel	3.1
Marinas	2.6
Leases & Other	2.6
Subtotal	\$97.0
Taxes	59.4
Park Board Program Total	\$97.0



WHERE OUR MONEY WAS SPENT (in millions)

Community Centres, Pools, Rinks, Fitness	\$33.5
Neighbourhood Parks & Arboriculture	15.3
Maintenance	13.0
Administration	10.0
Golf Courses (including Pitch & Putt)	10.9
Stanley Park, VanDusen, Bloedel	9.4
Concessions	2.5
Marinas	1.6
Parking	0.8
Total Expenditures	\$97.0

An online version of the Park Board's 2008 Annual Report, with additional financial and donor information, is available at vancouverparks.ca. Click on Publications and follow the links.

GIVING BACK TO PARKS AND RECREATION

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made financial contributions to support parks and recreation. The Gifts for Parks Program provides much needed funding for ongoing beautification and preservation of parks. Last year, 96 new park amenities were funded such as benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks and commemorative trees. Several community groups provided the necessary funding for restoring the Windsweeper kinetic sculpture at Kitsilano Pool and the David Oppenheimer statue in Stanley Park. Funding was also provided for a unique installation of environmental art in Stanley Park. Thanks to family and friends who funded a climbing rock at West Point Grey Park playground.

The Park Board is fortunate to be the beneficiary of bequests from residents who are passionate about parks and recreation. Last year, bequests were made to Queen Elizabeth Park and Stanley Park.

Our Park Endowment continues to grow with two named endowments established in 2008. The Merilees Trail Endowment for Stanley Park was established to support conservation of park trails. The Lee Family Endowment was established to support conservation of Jericho Beach Park.

If you would like to support the conservation and preservation of our parks through a donation, please visit vancouverparks.ca.

