

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Message from the Chair and General Manager

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

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2009, and greetings on behalf of the elected Commissioners and staff of the Vancouver Park Board. Last year, we continued to keep our residents healthy and engaged and our city beautiful. This report highlights our amazing parks and recreation facilities, the ways we are achieving environmental leadership, exciting public art projects and powerful programs for people of all ages. It describes how we consulted with the public, celebrated the rich diversity of our citizens, supported active living and prepared for the once-in-a-lifetime experience of the 2010 Winter Games.

The many accomplishments would not have been possible without the general public's enthusiastic involvement, commitment of our dedicated employees and contributions of numerous partners, stakeholders and volunteers.

To be more sustainable, our annual report this year will be available online, in both English and Chinese, with just a few copies printed. You are invited to read it and learn about the wide range of parks and recreation services available to you and your family in this great city we call home.



Aaron Jasper
Chair



Peter Kuran
Acting General Manager

Park Board Commissioners



Sarah Blyth
Vice-Chair



Constance Barnes



Raj Hundal



Stuart Mackinnon



Ian Robertson



Loretta Woodcock



Come home to parks and recreation!

Since 1888, the Vancouver Park Board has been building and maintaining a world famous parks and recreation system. Vancouverites care about, indeed are passionate about, the work we have done for 122 years—whether it is promoting and protecting iconic Stanley Park or cutting the grass in your neighborhood greenspace, hosting a city-wide sculpture exhibition or sponsoring a local mural painted by kids, presenting Saturday morning yoga classes or providing the field for a regional soccer match, designing a popular community garden or planting dazzling displays in summer flower beds, teaching seniors to swim for the first time or lifeguarding long stretches of beaches. Most citizens—no matter what age, ability, culture, interests or income—enjoy the many and varied park and recreation programs, delivered directly or through our partners. We are champions of active living and play a big part of Vancouver being one of the most liveable cities in the world. Our commitment is to look to the future and adapt to Vancouver's ever-changing needs. More than 2,300 full-time and part-time/auxiliary staff make up the Park Board team, working for residents every day.

With community centres and parks in each and every one of the city's neighborhoods, it is easy to "come home to parks and recreation!"

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, field houses and a variety of attractions

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



Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

Preparing to welcome the world

"It was an incredible opportunity to be part of the crew that helped Games organizers prepare the ice sheet in this world class facility for use by world class athletes." Noel C, Mechanical Technician, Trout Lake

Throughout 2009, the Park Board worked tirelessly as a partner with VANOC and the City of Vancouver to be ready to host the 2010 Winter Games. Four spectacular Olympic facilities were finished on time and opened with fanfare for Games use—Trout Lake and Killarney Ice Rinks (training venues for figure skating and short track speed skating respectively), Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre in Hillcrest Park (competition venue for curling and wheelchair curling), and the recreation centre at Southeast False Creek (in the Olympic Village). All will become significant and much needed recreation legacies in the City. Many other Park Board programs and projects helped build excitement and awareness of the Games, including developing one of the two LiveCity sites at David Lam Park, approval for use of Jericho and Spanish Bank Parks as temporary RV sites to accommodate Games visitors, hosting One Year Countdown celebrations including free skates and a winter walk, supporting Host a City Happening celebrations in various neighborhoods, developing public art at 2010 venues and in parks, planning the torch relays, arranging use of Park Board facilities for specialized Games-time functions and developing online and print information for residents.



The elegant new Trout Lake rink, first phase of this community recreation complex's renewal, showcases BC wood throughout including downed timbers from Stanley Park.

AWARD ::

The Globe Foundation and World Green Building Council recognized the architects of the Park Board's four new 2010 Winter Games facilities (Trout Lake and Killarney Ice Rinks, Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre and the recreation centre at Southeast False Creek) with their Excellence in Green Building Award for sustainable venue construction.

AWARD ::

The architects of the new Trout Lake rink and Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre won BC's Wood First Champions award for innovative and creative use of wood products.

Stanley Park Update

New look for popular point

The reconstruction at Prospect Point allowed us to redirect surface water that went over the cliffs and down onto the seawall—it now filters through a rain garden, flows into Prospect Creek then empties into Beaver Lake helping to naturally refresh this important aquatic ecosystem." Brian Q, Acting Manager of Park Operations.

In 2009, the final phase of the restoration of Vancouver's beloved Stanley Park wrapped up at one of its most popular tourist destinations. The last of the road realignment work at Prospect Point was completed and a new viewing platform opened. The major project will bring benefits to both the park itself and to some eight million visitors a year who enjoy it—safer, more accessible parking for buses and cars, better drainage for run off water to avoid serious erosion of the escarpment below, new flag poles to acknowledge the important history of the area as a signal point, expanded gardens with beautiful native plantings and a featured area with monument to recognize the many donors to the park's renewal.



Sweeping views from the new Lowden's Lookout deck at Prospect Point include Burrard Inlet, Lions Gate Bridge and North Shore Mountains.

Active, healthy living

Staying young at heart

"All the seniors were really excited about the new wellness circuit and very curious to learn how to get the best benefits from the equipment. It is a great addition to the park!" Jaine P, Fitness Programmer, Marpole Oakridge

For many Vancouverites, age is only a number! A new seniors wellness circuit was built in Tisdall Park off 49th Avenue last summer to support older residents and keep them active, able and independent. The project was funded in part by ActNow BC. The 13 activity stations incorporate state-of-the-art fitness equipment suitable for the outdoors. While the popular new circuit was designed for seniors, adults of any age can benefit from the cardio stepper, squat press, balance steps and tai chi wheels. The park's elegant plaza is surrounded by fragrant perennial beds, benches and shade trees – all making for a great place where seniors can gather, make new friends and incorporate exercise into their daily lives. And, speaking of being young at heart, Vancouver General Hospital's Happy Hearts Alliance fitness centre opened at Kensington Community Centre with certified instructors and clinical staff offering rehabilitation and promoting cardio vascular health.



The new Tisdall wellness circuit is located in the northwest corner of the park and offers a fun, safe workout to keep seniors fit and mobile.

"DID YOU KNOW?"

- Last year residents, employees, partners and stakeholders were invited to be part of discussions and decisions about park and facility development at 34 public open houses and workshops.
- More than \$27 million was spent in 2009 to acquire, maintain, construct and renew Park Board buildings and open space.
- 200 lifeguards worked at Vancouver's outdoor pools and beaches in the summer, some of them coming back annually over 30 years.
- Two new parks were officially opened in 2009—Ebisu in Marpole and Oak Meadows in South Cambie. The names of both parks were suggested by residents in a public process.

PARK BOARD BY THE NUMBERS

• 20 heritage buildings
• 15 food concessions
• 24 community centres

• 8 park restaurants
• 9 indoor and
5 outdoor pools

• 223 parks
• 8 ice rinks
• 7 skateboard parks

• 179 tennis courts
• 153 playing fields
• 138 ball diamonds

• 24 fitness centres
• 156 children's
playgrounds

• 137,000 street trees
• 18 kilometres
of beaches

Infrastructure renewal

Mt. Pleasant moves to 1 Kingsway

"The community loves the new building's central location and functional rooms especially the fitness centre - we have been busy since opening day!" Paul B, Programmer, Mt. Pleasant

A gleaming new Mt. Pleasant Community Centre opened its doors at year end in its new home at the 1 Kingsway civic centre. Sharing space under one roof with the relocated Mt. Pleasant branch library, child development centre, café and market rental housing, the stunning facility is 24% larger than the old centre at 16th & Ontario. It features a large gym with 26-foot climbing wall, expansive fitness centre, dance studio and multi purpose rooms and outdoor space. *Flow*, an art installation by Fiona Bowie comprised of ever-changing photo scenes projected onto street level glass, greets visitors as they enter. The new light-filled centre, built to LEED Gold certification (a high level of building performance), boasts many innovative design features for a healthy, green environment. The old community centre has been torn down and the land where it stood since 1966 will be returned to green space. A concept for the new park has been approved and the community will be consulted as to design and program elements.



The Mt. Pleasant Community Centre is at the heart of the exciting new multi-service facility at 1 Kingsway.

Award-winning golf

Three great courses...one great experience

"Vancouver Parks Golf continued to be a leader in the BC golf industry. Our ongoing marketing and customer service strategies kept us competitive even when the weather proved challenging." Howard N, Supervisor, Golf Operations

Cross-country skiing across the fairways? Snowshoeing on the back nine? The Park Board's three championship golf courses (Fraserview, McCleery and Langara) and three pitch & putt courses (Stanley Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and Rupert Park) typically offer year-round golfing in the heart of the city. But the heavy snows of January and February 2009 changed all that—the courses, along with many other parts of Vancouver, were closed for portions of both months because of a record setting cold streak. Thankfully, typical west coast weather returned and exceptional public golf resumed. Throughout the year, the Park Board continued its efforts to improve golf operations and enhance customer satisfaction. During 2009, 132,000 rounds of golf were booked online (up to 5 days in advance with no fee; 6 to 30 days for a small charge) and many customers signed up for the monthly e-newsletter and regular promotions. The first year of the professional Vancouver Open Golf Tournament brought extensive media and public attention to the full length facilities. Top notch greens, lessons, tournament packages, special events, youth programs, pro shop specials and great patio food with a view rounded out the experience for golfers of all abilities and ages.



Great, affordable public golf is within easy reach in Vancouver—in terms of dollars, distance and bookings.

Climate change and conservation

Going and staying green

"The Park Board has given me the unique opportunity to design and construct cutting-edge green technologies to power our facilities." Desh J, Engineering Assistant, Evans Yard.

Massive boilers, big enough to fill mechanical rooms at community centres, pools, rinks and other facilities, are becoming a thing of the past. As part of the Park Board's continued drive to be more sustainable, the early 20th century technology used to heat water is now replaced at many buildings by sleek, small and efficient condensing boilers capturing heat previously sent up the chimney. The effort to be a greener organization was led by Phase II of the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan, an important City program which has lowered green house gases by the equivalent of 330 cars off the road a year. Over 120 projects at 30 sites have now upgraded ventilation, heating, hot water, control and lighting systems. A web-based energy tracking system was successfully piloted during the 2010 Winter Games at the Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre and the recreation centre at Southeast False Creek. It will be implemented in 2010 as part of a BC Hydro strategy at both Sunset Community Centre and Vancouver Aquatic Centre.



Last year, nine boilers were replaced at Renfrew Community Centre, Vancouver Aquatic Centre, Sunset Arena, Hastings Community Centre and Sunset Nursery.

- The official Stanley Park map and guide enjoyed a bold redesign with colourful graphics featuring the park's history, points of interest, activities, services, transportation, wildlife, hidden gems, special events and more.
- Two children's playgrounds—in Sunset and Locarno Parks—were renovated in 2009 to better serve families in the neighborhoods.
- The Park Board's own Sunset Nursery off Main Street grew 500,000 bedding plants for beautiful seasonal displays in destination and neighborhood parks across the city.
- The Park Board managed the Burrard and Heather public marinas on False Creek which house almost 700 boats, and operated a launching ramp in Vanier Park.
- Diwali, the annual Festival of Lights, was recognized at a number of community centres with a city-wide celebration attended by over 6,000 people.
- The Park Board continued to keep its gardens, parks, street trees and golf courses "off drugs", reducing and in most cases eliminating the use of toxic chemicals to prevent and control pests.

Passport to fun!

Running, jumping, playing ... what's not to like about this part of school? In 2009, the Park Board continued to inspire residents of all ages to step up their levels of physical activity by introducing all 33,000 Vancouver elementary students at 91 schools to the Active Adventure Passports. The program, which was started as a pilot with just one school in 2006, emphasized fitness and family fun while completing a prescribed set of activities laid out in a colourful passport booklet. These activities include swimming, skating, wall climbing, nature walks, special park days, athlete presentations and fitness circuits. The focus of the program is to help students and their families become more aware of local active living opportunities, and provide fun ways to be more active in their community.



What's the buzz?

It was a pollinator's paradise when the City of Vancouver, the Park Board and the Environmental Youth Alliance teamed up to launch the Mason Bee project, dedicated to improving habitat for the Blue Orchard Mason Bee. A super lodge at the Rose Garden in Stanley Park was one of three installed in larger, high profile parks to increase awareness about the importance of pollinators to our ecosystems and our food system. Designed and built by woodworking students at Britannia Secondary, the super lodges accommodate up to 720 female bees. Fifty smaller lodges were also installed by volunteer stewards across Vancouver in parks, community gardens, greenways and other public spaces.



Girl power!

Other than sports, what do a 1920s female hockey team, a young Olympian in rhythmic gymnastics, an international wheelchair tennis player and a blind running champion have in common? They were all part of a series of 12 "Remarkable Women: Honouring Women from our Vancouver Communities" posters created to mark International Women's Day and Women's History Month. The posters featured local women athletes and the women chosen spanned the decades, representing different sports and achievements at different levels. Poster honouree Barbara Howard was a competitor at the 1938 British Empire Games and first black woman to represent Canada in international track competition. The popular series was on display at Park Board facilities around the city, and poster making workshops were also held at a number of community centres.



The benefits go on and on!

Vancouver residents use parks and recreation services throughout their lives. Programs connect neighbours, improve the natural landscape and keep lives in balance.

Parks and rec is good for you!

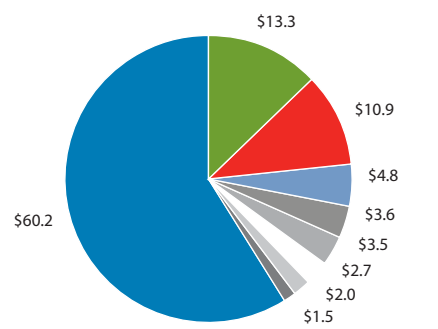
Personal life—fun and entertainment, exercise and fitness, relaxation and stress reduction, new skills and hobbies, illness prevention. The result = active and healthy lifestyles

Social scene—getting to know people, participating in groups, building community spirit, creating strong families, supporting individuals, producing leaders, coping with busy lives. The result = more shared experiences

World around us—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

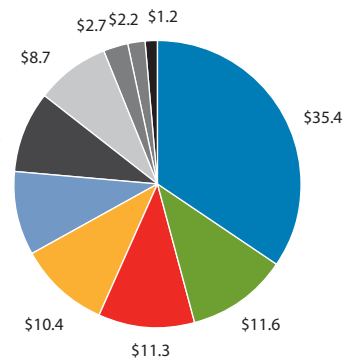
Economy & business—increased property values, employment and training opportunities, investment and capital development, community revitalization, tourism support. The result = a better quality of life

Operating budget 2009



WHERE OUR MONEY CAME FROM (in millions)

Community centres, pools, rinks, fitness	\$13.3
Golf courses (including pitch & putt)	10.9
Parking	4.8
Concessions	3.6
Stanley Park, VanDusen, QE Park	3.5
Marinas	2.7
Leases	2.0
Reserve programs & other	1.5
Subtotal	\$42.3
Taxes	60.2
Park Board total program	\$102.5



WHERE OUR MONEY WAS SPENT (in millions)

Community centres, pools, rinks, fitness	\$35.4
Infrastructure maintenance	11.6
Planning & administration	11.3
Golf courses (including pitch & putt)	10.4
Stanley Park, VanDusen, QE Park	9.7
Neighbourhood parks & beaches	9.3
Street trees, sanitation & janitorial	8.7
Concessions	2.7
Marinas & parking	2.2
Leases & reserve programs	1.2
Park Board total program	\$102.5

GIVING BACK TO PARKS AND RECREATION

We want to thank our donors for creating positive and lasting impacts for our city's urban parks. Through the generous philanthropy of residents and visitors, we are able to make real the dreams of individuals, organizations and community groups who wish to enhance Vancouver. Donations help us in our role as the guardian of our community's natural environment to ensure parks are preserved for many generations to enjoy.

Last year, 115 new park benches were dedicated. The Park Conservation Fund was generously supported through monthly donations, in-memory and in-honour gifts as well as the Adopt-A-Tree program. Our Park Conservation and Recreation Endowment continues to grow with five named endowments established in 2009. One example is a couple who established an endowment in celebration of their wedding – a marriage of hearts and values.

"At this stage in our life it is not necessary to receive traditional wedding gifts. Instead, we have chosen to establish an endowment to support park conservation and recreation – something we feel very strongly about." – Andrew & Crystal Johns

The Park Board is fortunate to be the beneficiary of bequests from residents who are passionate about urban parks and recreation. Last year, a Planned Giving program was launched to promote the benefits of leaving a gift now or in the future for your favourite community park or recreation facility.

To support the conservation and preservation of urban parks and recreation through a donation, please visit vancouverparks.ca

