

Date: January 6, 2009



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Potential Skateboard Park in Kensington Park

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board direct staff to conduct a public consultation process with respect to potential installation of a skateboard park within Kensington Park.

POLICY

On October 31, 2005 the Board approved a [Skateboard Strategy for Vancouver](#) to “assist in guiding capital investments so that skateparks are successful in the short and long term for all involved – skateboarders, other park users as well as residents living near the facilities.” The Strategy calls for the provision of additional skateparks in Vancouver, with a better distribution of this service.

In May 2008, Park Board and Council approved “Vancouver Sport for Life,” the Vancouver Sport Strategy (VSS) as a guide to future initiatives and engagement with sport programs, facilities and events. The Strategy (p. 14) references skateboarding as an individual “special sport” amongst “Sports Participated in by Vancouver Residents.”

BACKGROUND

At present, there are six skateboard facilities in Vancouver parks, with five skateparks added in the last five years:

- China Creek South Park
- Hastings Park
- Strathcona Park
- Downtown Skate Plaza
- Coopers Park
- Quilchena Park

Five of the existing six skateparks in Vancouver are located east of Cambie Street and north of 12th Avenue, and therefore opportunities for this sport are concentrated in the northeast quadrant of the city. The addition of the skatepark at Quilchena Park in 2005 was an important first step in distributing skateparks throughout the city. However, there remain significant geographic gaps, especially south of 12th Avenue and east of Main

Street, where no facilities exist and skateboarders, especially children and youth, have to travel long distances from their homes to get to a skatepark.

The Skateboard Strategy identifies five criteria to guide the identification and selection of locations for new skateboard facilities. A candidate site should meet as many of the following criteria as possible:

- the proposed skateboard facility should be located where some support services are available nearby (e.g. public washrooms, drinking fountain, youth worker, first aid);
- the proposed skateboard facility should be located where noise can be minimized for nearby residents;
- the proposed skateboard facility should be located where it is visible from a Park Board building or from a nearby street;
- the proposed skateboard facility should not displace other established park uses or a group of park users; and
- the proposed skateboard facility should not be significantly out of character with the park.

Funding is available from the 2006-2008 Capital Plan for the development of a new skateboard park, envisioned to be a local-serving rather than a destination facility, and oriented to entry-level rather than advanced skateboarding. The scale of the installation would be roughly comparable to the skateparks in Strathcona and Quilchena Parks, each with a footprint roughly comparable to a single tennis court.

DISCUSSION

Following through on the objective of developing a skatepark in the southeast quadrant of Vancouver, staff have identified several possible locations scoring well in relation to the criteria in the skate strategy. Among the highest ranking opportunities are Killarney Park, Kensington Park and Fraserview Park. In the fall of 2008 a public consultation process at Killarney Park generated significant opposition to the concept, and this proposal is not being pursued. Fraserview Park is a future possibility that can be explored in the upcoming park renewal project, which is funded in the 2009-2011 Capital Plan.

Discussions on a possible skateboard park have taken place with staff and the Community Association Program Committee at Kensington Community Centre. No formal position has been taken by the Association either in support of or in opposition to the proposal, but a number of concerns have been identified and considered, especially as to the timing and appropriate siting for a skateboard facility within the Park

The area most likely suitable for the proposed installation is somewhere on the open space west of the community centre and south of the playing fields (Appendix A). This is a fairly large area, with a playground near the bottom of the slope near the parking lot, but currently with limited use otherwise. The opinion was expressed that the future development of the whole area be considered before a commitment is made as to siting a skateboard facility in this context. Specific related concerns were that the siting of the facility not constrain future expansion of the Community Centre, that it not be too close to residences on 37th Avenue, and that it not be overly exposed to danger from traffic on Clark Drive. A question was also raised as to the suitability of ground conditions, because of possible underground streams.

Concerns were also expressed more generally around safety and liability issues, and the level of programming and supervisory support that might be expected from the community centre. These matters all need to be responded to satisfactorily through further consultation and planning. On this basis, it is proposed to expand the consultation process to engage the broader community, including potential users, other park stakeholders and neighbourhood residents. The consultation process will entail the following:

- *Project notification:* Interested parties will be advised via signage on site, media advisory and advertising, direct e-mail to identified park and activity stakeholders, and flyers to surrounding residents.
- *Open House:* An open house will be held at community centre, with background information on display and staff in attendance to answer questions and record feedback.
- *Park Board website:* The Open House presentation will be made available online, via the Park Board website for review and comment by interested parties.

Following the public process, staff will report back with consultation findings and a more detailed design concept for consideration by the Board.

SUMMARY

Consistent with direction previously given in the context of the “Skateboard Strategy for Vancouver,” the Board is asked to approve a public consultation process, according to the terms outlined in this report, regarding a potential skateboard installation in Kensington Park.

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