



Date: July 20, 2011

**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Park Board Strategic Plan – Approval of Strategic Framework**

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board endorse the high level strategic framework as outlined in the attached Board Report.*

## POLICY

The Board endorsed the organization's previous five year Strategic Plan and Mission Statement in June 2005.

## BACKGROUND

Strategic planning is a process used by organizations to set overall long-term strategic direction. It clarifies an organization's purpose (mission statement), what they want to be (vision statement), and establishes key directions to achieve that vision (framework). The strategic plan is a document that summarizes the results of the planning process and is used to communicate an organization's mission, vision, and priority directions.

The Park Board's previous strategic planning initiatives resulted in the development of strategic plans for the 2001-2005 and 2005-2010 timeframes. Both of these plans set out five year action plans for the organization. The 2001-2005 plan contained mission and vision statements, while the 2005-2010 plan contained only a mission statement. The 2005-2010 plan expired last year, and the objective of this planning initiative is to renew the plan and establish a strategic vision and framework for the next 5 years.

## Overview and Approach

Initiated by the organization's Board of Commissioners and Executive Team, the renewal of the Park Board strategic plan began in April 2011, with a goal of enhancing focus and alignment by establishing clear priorities for the future. With this in mind, the planning process builds on previous Park Board successes and links to key City of Vancouver plans and initiatives.

To facilitate alignment and establish a strong foundation for future implementation, a cascading planning approach was utilized (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 – Cascading Planning Approach**



This cascading approach will be implemented in two phases:

**Phase 1: April to August 2011 – *Setting the Foundation for the Future***

The outcomes from this phase include:

- Celebration of successes and accomplishments from the previous plan
- Current state/situation assessment
- Stakeholder engagement
- Five year vision for the Park Board
- Renewed strategic direction and strategic framework

**Phase 2: January 2012 – *Bringing the Plan to Life***

The outcomes from this phase include:

- Action plan
- Prioritization
- Resource allocation
- Implementation plans
- Metrics

This report addresses Phase 1 of the planning approach only.

During Phase 1, an extensive data gathering process was undertaken to identify key factors influencing/impacting the Park Board’s planning efforts (including past successes, internal and external environmental factors, and a best practice review). This information provided context and resulted in the production of a comprehensive situation assessment.

To obtain Park Board specific perspectives and input, additional insights were sought from internal and external stakeholders through surveys and a series of town hall meetings and workshops.

Stakeholders consulted included: the public, the Park Board’s Board of Commissioners, Senior Management Team, and employees, select City of Vancouver departments, Park Board partners, Community Associations, and other agencies and associations with which the Park Board has an ongoing relationship. A summary of the stakeholder engagement process is outlined below:

**Table 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Summary**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Number and Type of Engagement</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>Board of Commissioners</b>	3 Workshops	May 12, June 6, and July 14	Commissioners
<b>Senior Management Team</b>	3 Workshops	May 16, June 6, and July 13	Senior Management Team
<b>Employees</b>	7 Town Halls	May 16 and 17(x2), June 22(x2), and 29(x2)	298 participants
	2 Employee Surveys	May and June	259 responses
<b>Stakeholders (Partners, City of Vancouver, Community Associations, Agencies)</b>	1 Forum	June 21	53 participants
<b>Public</b>	4 Town Halls	June 22, 23, 28, and 29	105 participants
	1 Public Survey	June 21 to July 6	86 responses

Over 300 surveys, 230 stories, and 900 comments were generated via the stakeholder engagement process.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the research undertaken and feedback/input received through the stakeholder engagement initiatives, recommendations for renewal of the Park Board's mission, vision, and strategic framework are presented below for discussion and endorsement.

### **Recommended Park Board Mission Statement**

The Park Board's mission statement was reviewed and has effectively stood the test of time. Since it effectively identifies the nature and scope of the Park Board's work, only minor tweaking is recommended (removal of the word 'services' and addition of the word 'all').

*"Provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation to benefit all people, communities and the environment."*

### **Recommended Vision Statement**

The renewed plan has a five year horizon and is focused on achieving one clear outcome:

*"To be leaders in parks and recreation by connecting people to green space, active living and community."*

This vision identifies where the Park Board wants to be in five year's time and highlights key areas of focus for the future.

### **Recommended Strategic Framework – Directions and Goals**

The renewed vision will be achieved by focusing on the following four priority directions:

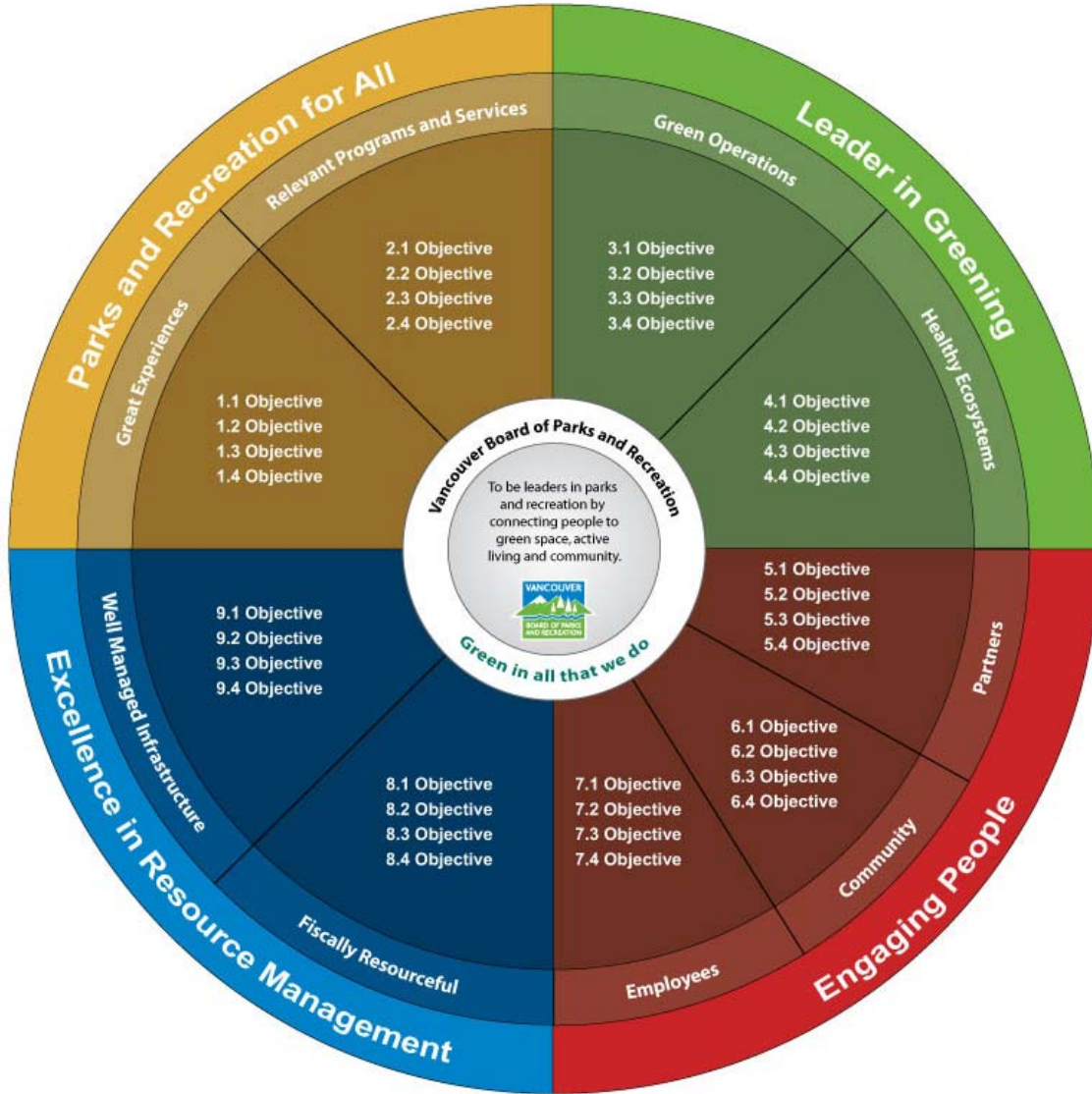
- Parks and Recreation for All
- Leader in Greening
- Engaging People
- Excellence in Resource Management

Each priority direction will be supported by a series of goals:

- Parks and Recreation for All
  - Great Experiences
  - Relevant Programs and Services
- Leader in Greening
  - Green Operations
  - Healthy Ecosystems
- Engaging People
  - Employees
  - Community
  - Partners
- Excellence in Resource Management
  - Well Managed Infrastructure
  - Fiscally Resourceful

A graphical summary of the recommended strategic framework is provided in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 – Recommended Strategic Framework**



### **Strategic Framework – Recommended Lens**

Since the theme of greening is such an important focus for the Park Board, a ‘green lens’ has been established within the strategic framework to keep it at the forefront of every implementation plan and decision made. The green lens encircles the vision and acts as a foundation for the four priority directions. The green lens is:

*“Green in all that we do”*

### **Recommended Principles**

Principles help to define how an organization operates and express core values and behaviours. They are guidelines for the way an organization does business. Five draft principles have been identified to help guide Park Board implementation efforts:

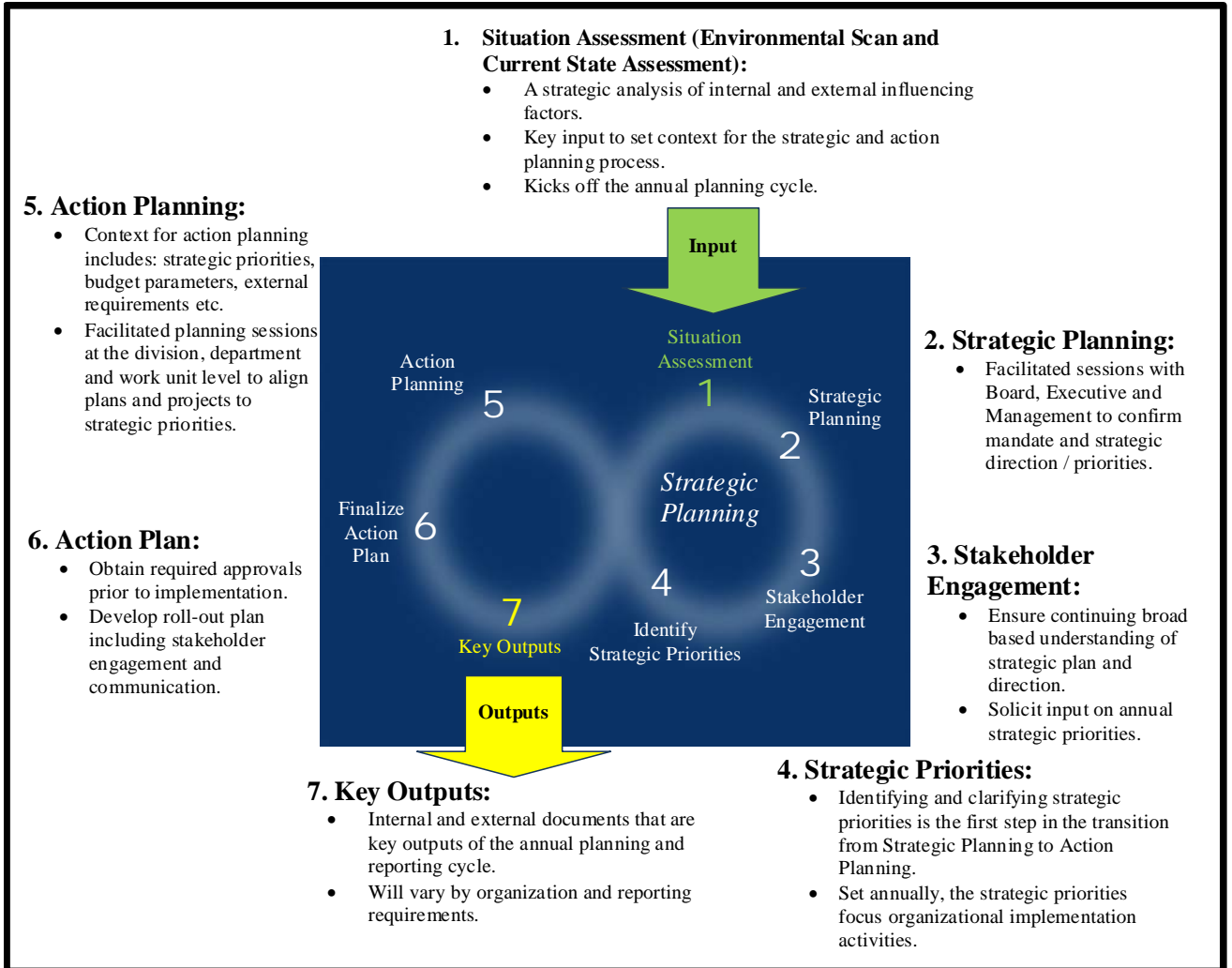
1. Advocate
2. Inclusive
3. People-focused
4. Innovative
5. Respect

The green lens and draft principles will act as important harmonizers of strategy and create additional focus for the Park Board as it moves to Phase 2 – *Bringing the Plan to Life*.

### **Next Steps**

Phase 2 of the planning process will begin in January 2012. This will involve the development of an action plan, prioritization of initiatives for implementation, resource allocation, implementation plans, and creation of metrics. An annual planning cycle will also be established as an outcome of this phase (Figure 3).

**Figure 3 – Annual Planning Cycle**



**SUMMARY**

Strategic Planning helps to anticipate the future and to identify how the Park Board and the services it provides should adapt to meet new community needs and environmental challenges.

The recently completed planning process enabled the Park Board to pause and think about what its key priorities and vision should be for the future. It provided the organization with an opportunity to listen to hundreds of people – the public, employees, interested parties, and our partners – and to take into account their thoughts and opinions on future direction. Our broad-based internal and external consultation process took place over a 2-month period, with 472 participants attending workshops, town hall meetings, and a forum. In addition, over 300 survey responses, 230 stories about the Park Board, and 900 comments were received.

The resulting strategic framework encapsulates this feedback and provides a roadmap to achieving our vision:

*“To be leaders in parks and recreation by connecting people to green space, active living and community.”*

The Park Board remains committed to preserving and protecting its resources, and to valuing its people while providing a sustainable and ‘green’ parks and recreation system that is accessible to all.

Based on this foundation and on the feedback received during consultation, our strategic framework outlines four priority directions that will focus Park Board efforts over the next five years:

- Parks and Recreation for All
- Leader in Greening
- Engaging People
- Excellence in Resource Management

The renewed plan celebrates and builds on the Park Board’s successes and sets the course for an exciting future in which each employee contributes to the realization of the organization’s vision. It will enable the Park Board to better prioritize its actions and to direct resources towards activities that will help the organization to better deliver on its ultimate goal of providing leading parks and recreation services.

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