



## VANCOUVER COMMUNITY RECREATION JOINT OPERATING AGREEMENT: *RENEWING THE PARTNERSHIP*

### Joint Operating Agreement Task Force Discussion Paper

Paper prepared for soliciting early input that the Task Force can incorporate into the development of options for further consultation. A companion Progress Report documents the progress of the Task Force to date and is useful background material to support this Discussion Paper.

**Summary:** The Joint Operating Agreement Task Force was established in recognition of the need for a renewal of the partnership between the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (Park Board) and each of 20 not-for-profit Community Association Societies (Associations). The Community Associations, with the support of the Park Board, initiated the Task Force. The framework and current Joint Operating Agreement were developed in the late 1970's to provide community-based recreation and leisure opportunities and community services to the residents of each Vancouver community. The mandate of the Task Force is to make recommendations to the Park Board and Associations which will result in the development of a new agreement and associated tools to strengthen the partnership and enhance the capacity of both to better provide for the recreation needs of citizens. This Discussion Paper is one of several mechanisms that the Task Force is using to solicit broad discussion on the issues and will use the results of the discussion to formulate options that will be presented to the community and stakeholders for consultation. A companion Progress Report is also being distributed at the same time.

**Acknowledgements:** We are grateful to Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and staff for endorsing and participating in the work of the Task Force to date. We are equally grateful to the Community Association Societies Executives, members and staff for their endorsement and participation. The contribution of research from consultants Jennifer Wilson and Anne Morrison has greatly enhanced our work for which we are thankful. Finally, we thank Gail Thodeson, Administrative Assistant with the Park Board who has added the burden of administering our web site, minutes, and keeping the Task Force organized to her already busy workload.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

How can residents, communities, Community Association Societies and the Vancouver Park Board work more effectively together to ensure Vancouver residents receive the best possible public recreation services? The Joint Operating Agreement Task Force wants you to participate in the discussion of this important citywide question. Your input will help the Task Force develop some clear options for future ways to work together and improve services. The Task Force will consult with stakeholders again following this discussion, to review options, before developing recommendations to be presented in 2004. The Task Force June 2003 Progress Report contains useful background information.

### 1.1 JOINT OPERATING AGREEMENT TASK FORCE

The Joint Operating Agreement Task Force was formed in 2001 to review and revitalize the partnership agreement between the Park Board and 20 voluntary not-for-profit Community Centre Associations that currently operate under a 25 year old joint operating agreement. The Task Force consists of 12 members, 6 each from the Community Associations and Park Board staff and jointly chaired by one representative from each. The Task Force is a working group that will produce a final report with recommendations in 2004 and is co-funded by Community Associations and the Park Board. Since 2001, the Task Force has been in the development and research phases of our work and is now at a stage to report out on preliminary findings and engage in dialogue. Our work plan sets out the following stages:



| Nov 2001  | June 2002  | June 2003   | Fall/Winter/03  | Spring 2004              | September 2004                                     |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|--|
| Development Phase<br>– 8 months<br><br>- Form Task Force<br>- Develop Terms of Reference<br>- Approval to proceed<br>- Initial consultation with stakeholders | Research & Analysis<br>– 12 months<br><br>- Form work groups<br>- Hire consultant<br>- Conduct research and analysis | Reporting Out and Engaging in Dialogue<br><br>Developing Options<br><br><b>TODAY</b><br> | Consultation Phase<br><br>Developing Recommendations and Final Report | Endorsement and Approval | Implementation Phase<br><br>New Agreement in Place |

## MEMBERSHIP OF JOINT OPERATING AGREEMENT TASK FORCE

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Ingrid Alderson          | - The Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Society            |
| Daisy Chin               | - Park Board Co-ordinator – Special Events and Filming            |
| Lorraine Chow            | - Renfrew Park Community Association                              |
| Warren Coughlan          | - Park Board Community Recreation Supervisor, Stanley District    |
| Himmat Gill              | - Killarney Community Centre Society                              |
| Anita Ho                 | - Park Board Director of Corporate Services                       |
| Yvonne Howe              | - Mount Pleasant Community Centre Association                     |
| Lori MacKay, Co-Chair    | - Park Board Director of Parks and Recreation – Van East District |
| Diane Murphy             | - Park Board District Recreation Manager – QE District            |
| Gordon Plottel, Co-Chair | - Douglas Park Community Association Society                      |
| Dan Tidball              | - Champlain Heights Community Association Society                 |
| Terry Walton             | - Park Board Manager Recreation Services, Stanley District        |

## 1.2 JOINT OPERATING AGREEMENT DISCUSSION PAPER

The Joint Operating Agreement Task Force has produced this discussion paper. The paper aims to provide a vehicle for sharing initial thoughts and ideas on topics to encourage discussion and develop a shared direction to guide all of our efforts to improve recreation services in Vancouver. The Discussion Paper is being brought to the attention of key stakeholders including Community Associations, affiliated community groups, staff, unions, city departments, and other partners of the Park Board. The contents expressed in this paper are entirely those of the Task Force and should not be attributed in any manner to the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, to its affiliated Community Associations or to the individual members of the Task Force or organizations they represent. Citation and the use of this material should take into account this provisional character.

Free copies of this discussion paper can be downloaded from the Joint Operating Agreement Task Force web page at [www.parks.vancouver.bc.ca](http://www.parks.vancouver.bc.ca) under “Joint Operating Agreement Task Force” – “Discussion Paper”.

## 1.3 HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION AND SEND US YOUR INPUT:

### Step 1 GET TOGETHER AND TALK

Using the discussion paper as a guide, talk with others interested in this issue. Additional information is available on our web site and Task Force members will be available to attend a limited number of regional meetings. The Task Force suggests that reading the June 2003 Progress Report of the Task Force will provide valuable background information to aid in the discussion.

### Step 2 PARTICIPATE IN A DISCUSSION PAPER FEEDBACK SESSION

The Task Force will host several sessions in September 2003 where you can participate in group discussions with Task Force representatives and other interested individuals. Dates, time and locations will be posted on the Task Force web site.

### Step 3 SUBMIT A WRITTEN RESPONSE

Submissions should be made directly to the Co-Chairs, Joint Operating Agreement Task Force:

Mail - c/o 955 Evans Avenue,  
Vancouver, BC V6A 4C8 Fax - (604) 257-8616

Internet - Respond on-line at [www.parks.vancouver.bc.ca](http://www.parks.vancouver.bc.ca) under “Joint Operating Agreement Task Force” in the “Contact Us” box.

Input on the Discussion Paper will be collected until September 30, 2003

### Step 3 FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS

The Task Force will use its web site to post reports, notices and minutes of meetings. Stay tuned.

## 2 - DISCUSSION

### 2.1 PRIORITY ISSUES

Our work to date suggests that a number of priority areas are in need of renewal. For background information, the Task Force has produced a Progress Report dated June 2003, which reports on research results. The priority issues have been organized under four main themes:

**Developing a Shared Vision**

**Creating Effective Alliances**

**Serving Community Needs**

**Maximizing Available Resources**

These issues form the basis of our following discussions. You are invited to reflect on the points described in these discussions and share your thoughts with us.

The following section introduces some starting points to get the conversations going and some questions to encourage dialogue. This is an open dialogue – feel free to let the conversations move in directions of key interest to you and to ask questions which probe your issues.

## 2.2 KEY ISSUE: DEVELOPING SHARED VISION and VALUES

### **Developing a Shared Vision** Alignment of purpose and values

The Task Force has identified the need to articulate a shared vision as direction for the future, structured around the primary consideration of public service. The Task Force is committed to continuing with a partnership approach. Our history of working together suggests the following as important principles in a shared statement of vision and values:

#### **Vision**

With a wide range of features and amenities, a community centre serves as the hub of our neighbourhoods and links residents together in quality environments, which are welcoming, respect diversity and support residents of all interests and abilities.

Our tradition and vision commit to a partnership approach, which links the best of our resources. Volunteers, staff, agencies and government commit to working together to maximize the benefits of recreation for every Vancouver resident. There is strength in numbers. Together we can make a difference.

All Vancouver residents will thrive in a city that provides access to a wide range of physical, social, cultural, skill development and creative opportunities for self expression, development and fulfillment.

#### **Values**

Vancouver is celebrated for its quality of life and values that respect community identity, diversity, dignity, equity and healthy active living.

Recreation is valued as a vital component in developing strong communities and developing healthy citizens.

Local Community Centres are valued as important community assets that demonstrate our collective priority to achieve our potential as individuals, neighbourhoods, communities and a vibrant and healthy City.

We believe in maintaining a high level of public trust and confidence and demonstrate accountability in decision making to our members, clients and stakeholders. We place the community first in all decision making. We focus on outcomes as well as process and achieve results that benefit the public. We are flexible and optimistic in our approach and welcome change as an opportunity.

**SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS:**

- *Do you agree with the ideas outlined in these statements?*
  - *What points need to be added or taken away?*
  - *How can the vision and values be expressed in a simple way which will be understood by everyone?*
  - *What are the guiding principles we need to work effectively together?*
  - *Other points -*
- 
- 

**2.3 KEY ISSUE: SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Community Needs</b><br/>Universal Access<br/>Coordination<br/>Trends<br/>Equity<br/>Quality Service Standards</p> |
|---|

Community Centres connect neighbours in their communities and operate a range of programs which reflect the needs of a local community. There is a Community Centre within 3.5km of every door step in the City.

The fundamental purpose of the Joint Operating Agreement between the Park Board and the Community Associations is to provide public recreation and community service programs to communities that are uniquely relevant to the changing needs of Vancouver residents. The partnership needs to balance the needs of local neighbourhood residents with the needs of broader communities of interest and the public as a whole. The public should expect the same quality standards of recreation service across the city. Duplication and competition between service providers is to be avoided through a coordinated approach to service delivery. Principles of equity and sustainability should be considered in balancing demands and resources across the entire system. Participation rates and program effectiveness should be measurable across the system in a standardized way.

**Suggested discussion points:**

- *Do you agree with the ideas outlined in these statements?*
- *How do Community Associations help Community Centres be more open, accessible and community-oriented?*

- *How can the partners evaluate community participation and demonstrate effectiveness in meeting priority community needs?*
  - *How can communication between the Association and the community be more effective?*
  - *How do you define “community”?*
  - *Other Points -*
- 
- 

## 2.4 KEY ISSUE: CREATING EFFECTIVE ALLIANCES

**Creating Effective Alliances**

- Clarity on Roles and Responsibilities
- Investment in alliance building processes
- Shared accountability and recognition
- Multiple Strategies
- Concrete objectives and focus on visible results

### 2.4.1 ROLES

Community Associations are incorporated under the BC Societies Act and, as such, may enter into contracts, hire staff and have assets. They have a legal identity separate from its members and are governed by its constitution and bylaws. Directors of a Society have important duties under the Act and can be held personally liable for the activities of the Society. In addition to the roles and responsibilities which Societies hold as independent legal entities, they currently have either advisory or decision making roles in the following areas of the delivery of recreation programs under the Joint Operating Agreement with the Park Board:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- operating hours for centres</li> <li>- community centre rentals</li> <li>- programs</li> <li>- Park Board staffing</li> <li>- Association staffing</li> <li>- budget</li> <li>- methods of reporting/communicating</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>through mutual agreement</li> <li>through decision making</li> <li>through mutual agreement</li> <li>through direction, mutual agreement, input in specific areas</li> <li>through exclusive decision making with support from Park Board</li> <li>through mutual agreement and decision making in specific areas</li> <li>exclusive responsibilities</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

*Possible Discussion Points:*

- *What are the most appropriate and effective roles for Community Associations in the delivery of recreation services at community centres? What about in pools, parks or other facilities in parks?*
- *What are the most appropriate and effective roles for the Park Board in the delivery of recreation services at community centres?*
- *In a city as large and diverse as Vancouver, does a “one size fits all” approach for all 20 Community Associations make sense? Should a range of roles and responsibilities to suit the capacity of individual Community Associations at different times be explored?*

*If you answered yes to the previous question, in what ways could roles be the same in all parts of the City? What ways could they be different?*

*Other Points -*

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**2.4.2 REPRESENTATION**

Each individual Community Association works hard to reflect broad community representation in the execution of their duties. Each is guided by their constitution and by-laws as filed under the BC Societies Act.

***POSSIBLE DISCUSSION POINTS:***

- *How can Community Associations best ensure they represent their communities?*
- *What suggestions do you have for recruiting directors to each Society to ensure they reflect the current community?*
- *How can broader regional or citywide or “communities of interest” (e.g. cultural groups, sports, arts, age specific or gender specific) be reflected in local Community Associations?*

*Other Points -*

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### 2.4.3 RELATIONSHIPS

Community Associations and the Park Board do not work in isolation. There is a complex network of other partners, community groups, stakeholders, staff, agencies, unions and government departments that are influenced and affected by this partnership arrangement.

#### ***Possible Discussion Points:***

- *How can the relationships between the Community Associations and Park Board be clear to the public?*
- *What should be the relationship among the different Community Associations?*
- *How do local Park Board staff and the local Community Association work effectively together?*
- *What should be the relationship between the Association staff and the Community Association and these same staff and the Park Board?*
- *How can the Park Board and the Associations best recognize each others contributions to the partnership?*
- *What steps can be taken to avoid conflicts of interest?*

*Other Points -*

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### 2.4.4 SUPPORTS

Common interests, vision and goals are the basis for a working partnership. To be effective, a climate of sharing and mutual support needs to be engendered to strengthen the results the partnership can achieve.

#### ***Possible Discussion Points:***

- *What support systems would be beneficial for Community Associations?*
  - i) *What might they look like?*
  - ii) *In what ways could skills and training be enhanced?*
- *What skills and training do Park Board community centre staff and management need?*
- *What benefits or drawback would there be in establishing a formal citywide organization of Associations?*
- *In what ways could Community Associations support the vision, mandate and goals of the Park Board and other Associations?*

- *In what ways could the Park Board support the vision, mandate and goals of each Association?*

*Other Points -*

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## 2.5 KEY ISSUE – MAXIMIZING AVAILABLE RESOURCES

### **Maximizing Available Resources**

Core Funding  
Revenue Sharing  
Human Resource Management  
Fundraising

On average, the combined expenses of the Park Board and the 20 Associations to deliver community centre services are \$24 million (does not include rink and aquatic services). Approximately \$15 million is recovered through user fees each year (\$10 m to Association and \$5 m to Park Board) and the balance is primarily funded through the operating budget provided by City of Vancouver. Everyone is working to stretch resources to achieve the best results on satisfying increasing demands. Money, time, facilities, and people power in the form of volunteers and staff are all experiencing pressures. Searching for efficiencies, discovering alternative approaches to satisfy demands and new sources for revenue have become everyday activities in community centres. Not all communities have the same potential to generate user fees and each community has different priority needs. Basic funding levels from the Park Board have traditionally been established on historic funding patterns. An approach to address disparity between communities needs and resources could be addressed through redistribution of resources, either of basic funding or revenues. The physical infrastructure of community centres has been getting older over the past 25 years with increasing operating costs for basic maintenance and repairs. Each Community Association has its own unique methods of financial reporting. Staffing patterns have been established by tradition and there is restricted ability to deploy human resources to address system priorities.

### ***Possible Discussion Points:***

- *What financial support should Park Board provide in the operation of community centres?*
- *What financial support should the Community Associations provide?*
- *Do you believe there are inequities in the distribution and availability of resources between community centres? If so, should there be a mechanism to address inequities on a citywide basis?*
- *What benefits or drawbacks would there be in redeploying staff resources to address priority needs?*
- *How can we improve on consistent and compatible financial reporting among the Community Associations and the Park Board to aid in analysis, planning and decision-making?*
- *How can the Associations and the Park Board work effectively together for capital plan improvements.*

Other Points - \_\_\_\_\_

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## 2.6 OTHER KEY ISSUES AND COMMENTS

Please feel free to express your issues and suggestions on how we can improve the delivery of recreation services at community centres through the joint operating agreement between the Park Board and the Community Associations.

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**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS DISCUSSION**  
**WE HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU**

