

# VANCOUVER BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2010

### From the Chair and General Manager

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

In 2010, the Vancouver Park Board continued its proud history of enriching the lives of residents in so many ways.

We expanded recreation facilities, upgraded parks, and launched new programs and services – all the while pursuing a more sustainable approach to doing business, building community spirit, collaborating with residents in decision making, carefully managing our resources and keeping pace with the changing needs of our great city.

Our people, places and parks all shone brightly during the 2010 Winter Games. As a partner with the City and VANOC and with a focus on community, we contributed to the spectacular success of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games – delivering great service and tackling many challenges along the way.

Guided by the elected Board of Commissioners, the year's many accomplishments were made possible through the general public's enthusiastic involvement, contributions of volunteers, partners and stakeholders, and hard work and dedication of staff.

We extend our collective thanks to Peter Kuran for his commitment and strong leadership as Acting General Manager in the first eight months of the year.

#### Park Board Commissioners



Constance Barnes  
Vice-Chair

Sarah Blyth

Raj Hundal



Stuart Mackinnon

Ian Robertson

Loretta Woodcock



Aaron Jasper  
Chair



Malcolm Bromley  
General Manager



### Parks and recreation for all

For 123 years, the Park Board has been building and maintaining a public parks and recreation system that is admired around the world. We are known as leaders in greening our operations and the environment around us. Our programs engage employees, the community and partners - connecting them to green space and active living. We strive to wisely manage the facilities and parks under our care. The popular services we offer are key to the overall well being of residents in the City of Vancouver.

Nearly 2,400 staff make up the Park Board team. We are arborists and gardeners, painters and carpenters, mechanics and electricians, lifeguards, skate and swim instructors, youth and seniors workers, urban planners and architects, graphic designers and writers, accountants and payroll clerks, marina operators, arts and sports programmers, health and safety officers, marketing coordinators, engineers, cashiers, system analysts and many other jobs that touch the lives of residents every day.

#### 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



vancouverparks.ca

This annual report will be available on line in both English and Chinese.

**Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games**

**Our time to shine!**

*"It truly was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of the city-wide Host City Team. The many highlights include supporting the Olympic Flame Relay, hosting Prince Andrew's visit to the Protocol Operations Centre and working closely with the Four Host First Nations Protocol Team". Dave R, Film and Events Officer*

We welcomed the world! For months leading up to the lighting of the Olympic flame on February 12, 2010 to well past the awarding of the last medals for the Paralympics, Park Board staff went above and beyond in preparing sites, providing extra service, celebrating with the community and ensuring everything in our system ran smoothly. From the transformation of the Roundhouse into festive Casa Italia (home of the Italian National Olympic Committee), to Coal Harbour Community Centre's makeover into the intergovernmental hub, to welcoming the torch at dawn beside the iconic Inukshuk sculpture on English Bay, to guiding the families of government and sport leaders through the forests of Stanley Park – the experiences of the Games were indeed "glowing hearts" moments for our employees.

Among the many Park Board contributions to the Olympics and Paralympics:

- Providing official protocol and hosting duties for visiting dignitaries, athletes, officials and guests
- Planning and staging celebration events for the torch relays
- Partnering on public art programs for artworks on park lands and in community recreation facilities
- Helping to operate four legacy venues for practice and competition events
- Managing a temporary RV park at Jericho Beach for visitor accommodation
- Producing special horticulture and lighting displays
- Keeping our parks, seawall and other green spaces clean near celebration sites and venues
- Organizing, staging and promoting special Community Happenings festivals across the city
- Working with the world's media to tell Vancouver's story
- Developing public information materials for residents and tourists
- Serving as Host City Team volunteers at the Live Sites



The stunning Creekside Community Recreation Centre was opened on the Southeast False Creek waterfront in the Olympic Village as a legacy of the Games.



The Aquatic Centre at Hillcrest Park opened as the first phase of the impressive recreation complex on the site of the former Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre.



**AWARD ::**

International Award for Liveable Communities for the Southeast False Creek project from LivCom (endorsed by the United Nations Environment Program) for leading innovation in the field of environmental and community initiatives ("built" projects).

**AWARD ::**

Consulting Engineers of BC Award of Merit to Stantec Consulting Ltd. in recognition of the mechanical and electrical systems at Hillcrest Centre (Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre).

**Healthy living and wellness**

**Parks and beaches go smoke-free**

*"Rangers have been extremely pleased with the public's support for Vancouver's Smoking Regulation By-law. I am proud to play a key role in a movement towards a healthier and more environmentally conscious society - a movement that is gaining popularity in major cities around the world". Patrick C, Lead Ranger*

Vancouver smokers got one more great reason to quit when, backed by a new by-law, a complete smoking ban for parks and beaches was launched in September. Part of the Park Board's promotion of a healthy urban environment, the move addressed the serious health consequences of smoking, along with concerns about environmental impacts, litter and fire risks. The new regulations prohibit smoking in parks, beaches, seawall, trails and golf courses as well as sports fields and playgrounds. The by-law is wide ranging, affecting residents, visitors, park user groups, staff, contractors and volunteers. The goal in the first year of the program was voluntary compliance through education – with Park Rangers taking the lead in public information. Community partners supporting the smoking ban included Clean Air Coalition, Canadian Cancer Society (BC & Yukon), Vancouver Coastal Health and Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services.



Colorful signs built awareness for the smoking ban which extended to parking lots, access streets and side walks within park boundaries.

**"DID YOU KNOW?"**

- A decorative kiosk with information panels was unveiled in Fraser River Park, featuring interpretation of the working river's ecology, history and natural environment.
- East Vancouver's Tecumseh Park was redesigned with a red 1940s tractor serving as a magnet for neighborhood children.
- The Hudson Street portion of the Fraser River Trail was opened, providing increased access along the city's only riverside greenway.
- Historic Openheimer Park in the Downtown Eastside was upgraded with many new features including a new field house and washrooms, lawns, trees, seating areas and playground.

**PARK BOARD BY THE NUMBERS**

- 20 heritage buildings
- 8 park restaurants
- 223 parks
- 174 tennis courts
- 14 food concessions
- 9 indoor and 5 outdoor pools
- 8 ice rinks
- 153 playing fields
- 8 skateboard parks
- 127 ball diamonds
- 25 fitness centres
- 158 children's playgrounds
- 138,000 street trees
- 18 kilometres of beaches

## Urban agriculture

**Fruit trees offer beauty and bounty**

*"The most interesting aspect of working on this project was interacting with the Kwantlen design students. Their creativity and dedication to their designs was astounding. It's exciting to have people like that coming into the field of horticulture". Sophie D, Integrated Pest Management Coordinator*

Twenty five small fruit trees – apple, cherry, plum, pear and peach – were stars of the show and living symbols of community stewardship in the Park Board's first orchard which was planted at Falaise Park in November. Vancouver Christian School, Renfrew Elementary School and Windermere High School students and the Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute will use the fruit trees as an educational tool for ecology programming. The project supports the City's Greenest City Action Team's recommendations to plant 150,000 trees by 2020, as well as the Park Board's commitment to sustainable practices in urban agriculture and food security. The trees are not ornamental - local residents will be able to harvest fruit from them. The Falaise Park location was ideal, offering good sun exposure, air circulation and a nearby water supply. A bug garden, designed by students from Kwantlen Polytechnic University to control pests and pollinate trees, will be installed in the orchard soon.



Students, teachers and community partners came together in East Vancouver to plant the first of three orchards planned for city parks.

## Recreation trends

**New tricks for boarders and bikers**

*"Plans for a skatepark at Kensington were met with apprehension by local walkers, joggers and those who enjoy the views. But skaters have been respectful, polite and appreciative; and fears replaced with a new acceptance that boarders are citizens with another way of getting around". Booth P, Community Recreation Supervisor*

People on wheels had more to cheer about in 2010 – the Park Board opened two new facilities catering to skate boarders and BMX/mountain bikes. The new skate park at Kensington Park, the city's seventh, opened in July to rave reviews by local riders. The retro-style bowl, harkening back to the empty swimming pools used for skate boarding in California, is unique to the Lower Mainland. Decorated with colourful tiles, it features ledges, a gap, mini ramp and seating area for spectators. In September, BMXers and mountain bikers got their first dedicated bike park. Located in Vanier Park, it features formed dirt ramps, gaps and jumps that can be adjusted as well as beginner, intermediate and expert tracks. A small pump track will be expanded in future and viewers can enjoy the comforts of a big, comfy (concrete) couch. The success of the popular bike park relies on users to respect the dirt jumps by not riding on them when they are overly wet, spraying them down when they are dry and dusty, and grooming them when they are worn down.



The popular bowl-style Kensington skate park was in use by boarders moments after the project was completed and construction fencing came down.

## Access for all

**Inclusive fun in Kitsilano**

*"The new playground was a wonderful chance to engage with families, park staff and other agencies and organizations to continue to improve community recreation options for people with disabilities!" Melanie J, Recreation Programmer, Access Services*

Children of all abilities celebrated as the city's largest fully accessible playground opened in December on the waterfront at beautiful Kitsilano Beach Park. One of three showcase inclusive playgrounds built in the 2010 Winter Games host communities of Vancouver, Whistler and Richmond, the new Olympic legacy facility offers imaginative play, sensory experiences and fun in a safe environment. It enables kids to play and explore side by side with their siblings, friends, families and caregivers. A wheelchair accessible surface also allows parents and caregivers with physical disabilities access to the playground which features play elements such as an accessible sand table, rotating climber, saucer swings and custom benches made out of Stanley Park blow down logs. Partnering with the Park Board in design and construction of this world class playground were Ronald McDonald House Charities of Canada, Rick Hansen Foundation, 2010 Legacies Now, Province of British Columbia, Coca-Cola Canada and Shane's Inspiration.



Official opening day celebrations for the new playground included inspiring words from Vancouver's Man in Motion and ability advocate Rick Hansen (holding ribbon).

- Two new dog off-leash areas were added in Emery Barnes Park and Hinge Park in Southeast False Creek.
- A small solar panel system was commissioned at Stanley Park's Brockton Oval, as part of the Greenest City Action Team program to reduce both natural gas and electricity consumption.
- The Park Board's 7 hectare tree farm in Langley, in operation since the early 1970s, supplied about 2,000 trees to the street tree program. There are 30 species (including fruit and nut varieties) at the farm.
- At year end the Park Board had 5 artificial turf fields which each accommodated 2,000 hours of play per year including during the rainy season.
- Vancouver's parks made up 11% (1,300 hectares) of the City's land mass.
- Income generated from Park Board golf courses, marinas, restaurants and pay parking helped subsidize the costs of other parks and recreation programs such as skating and swimming.



## Walking with history

Vancouverites got a chance to get up close and personal with some of the city's oldest history when the new Steam Line Greenway opened. Starting on the north side of False Creek by the Roundhouse Steam Engine, the self-guided Steam Line Walking Tour (the newest in the Park Board's Active Communities lineup) passes through Yaletown and continues along a historic route to end near the Gastown Steam Clock. A vintage railway caboose installed near Yaletown Park showcases Vancouver's proud legacy of rail transportation. Conveniently located benches and rest areas along the 2.11 km route make for an easy and fun way to Step it Up!



## Get drawn in!

Everybody does it – from doodling while on the phone to drawing a map for directions. In June 2010, the Park Board and a number of community partners recognized and celebrated drawing for all when the inaugural "Vancouver Draw Down" was launched. Exhibitions and collaborative projects reconnected drawers with the pleasure of making their marks. Hundreds of participants were challenged to expand their ideas of drawing and were captivated by a unique series of happenings in their neighborhoods including button draw down workshops and a city wide chalk drop resulting in random acts of drawing. A team of local videographers and photographers documented the creative process which culminated in a lively finale event.



## It takes a village

More than 160,000 residents and tourists enjoyed an authentic First Nations experience when Stanley Park's Miniature Train plaza was transformed for the first time into Klahowya Village. The vibrant Aboriginal culture and history of British Columbia were celebrated all summer through song, dance, story telling, art and cuisine. Featured performers, artisans and the Spirit Catcher Train helped create the warmth and excitement of a traditional First Nations settlement in the forest of Vancouver's first park. Kids of all ages enjoyed hands-on craft making, visits with artists weaving and carving on site, an elder's area, and daily cultural tours of the family friendly village.



## Parks and rec is good for you!

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

### The benefits go on and on!

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

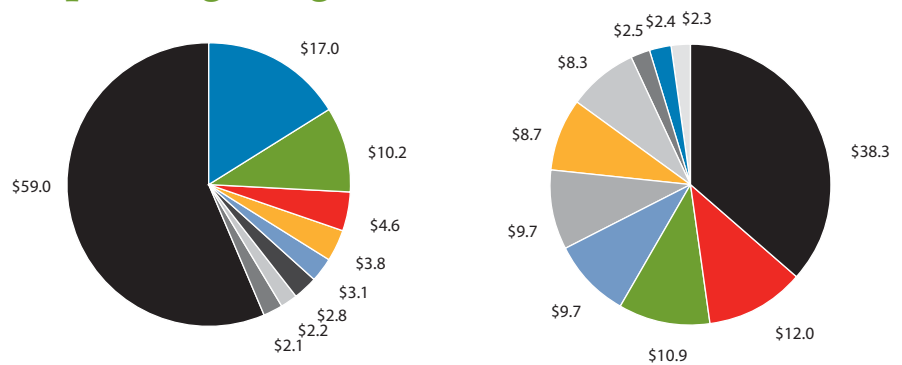
**Social scene**—getting to know people, participating in groups, building community spirit, creating strong families, supporting individuals, producing leaders, coping with busy lives. The result = more shared experiences

**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 2010



WHERE OUR MONEY CAME FROM (in millions)

Community centres, pools, rinks, fitness	\$17.0
Golf courses (including pitch & putt)	10.2
Parking	4.6
Stanley Park, VanDusen, QE Park	3.8
Concessions	3.1
Marinas	2.8
Leases	2.2
Reserve programs & other	2.1
Subtotal	\$45.8
Taxes	59.0
<b>Park Board total program</b>	<b>\$104.8</b>

WHERE OUR MONEY WAS SPENT (in millions)

Community centres, pools, rinks, fitness	\$38.3
Planning & administration	12.0
Infrastructure maintenance	10.9
Stanley Park, VanDusen, QE Park	9.7
Neighbourhood parks & beaches	9.7
Street trees, sanitation & janitorial	8.7
Golf courses (including pitch & putt)	8.3
Concessions	2.5
Marinas	2.4
Leases & reserve programs	2.3
<b>Park Board total program</b>	<b>\$104.8</b>

## GIVING BACK TO PARKS AND RECREATION

Philanthropy goes a long way to help the Vancouver Park Board.

Since 1986, when the Gifts for Parks Program was launched, over 10,000 people have donated \$18 million to support park conservation and help create new recreation opportunities.

Each year more and more people are donating to the Park Board, and last year was no exception - 310 new donors participated in the Gifts for Parks Program. 4 new tribute funds were created, 1 drinking fountain was refurbished and 67 new park benches were dedicated. In addition, 100 new Akebono cherry trees were planted at David Lam Park. The Park Board's endowment continues to grow with 2 new named endowments established to support park conservation and recreation activities. A new accessible playground was developed at Kitsilano Beach Park - a wonderful example of funding partners working together to provide residents with the city's first inclusive playground.

The Park Board is fortunate to be the beneficiary of bequests from residents who are passionate about their city. Our Legacy Giving Program makes it possible for you to create a legacy for your favourite park or recreation activity, now or in the future, through a gift in your will.

Donations to Canadian municipalities are tax deductible and the Park Board also accepts gifts of publicly traded securities, life insurance and charitable remainder trusts.

The most recent change in the program is that donations can now be made online and can be designated by you to support your favourite park or recreation activity.

If you would like to learn more, please visit [vancouverparks.ca](http://vancouverparks.ca)