



July 19, 2021

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **CRAB Park Improvements & Washrooms Update – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

In preparation for the [Member's Motion](#) that will be discussed at the Regular Board meeting this evening, the purpose of this memo is to:

- provide you an update on the CRAB Park at Portside washroom facilities;
- inform you about the upcoming public engagement planned to help identify priorities for improvements at CRAB Park through the \$1 million contribution from the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority; and
- provide an update on discussions related to the Healing Centre between Park Board and City of Vancouver Arts, Culture and Community Services (ACCS) staff.

Washroom Facilities

As advised in the [Enquiries Summary Report](#) provided on November 18, 2019, due to structural safety concerns the fieldhouse and washrooms at CRAB Park were closed to the public in late October 2019.

In January 2020, the Board received a staff [memo regarding CRAB Park Improvements & Washrooms](#) advising that stand-alone pre-fabricated washroom structures known as Portland Loos would be piloted in the park. In collaboration with Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM), two (2) Portland Loos will be installed funded by the 2019-2022 Capital Plan. CRAB Park ranks high on the priority list for new washrooms based on the Park Board's system-wide [Parks Washroom Strategy](#).

Through a request for proposal process, a successful proponent has been selected to lead the design coordination, construction documentation, and construction administration services for the installation of the prefabricated washroom units. The existing field house is planned to be demolished at the end of Q3 2021. The installation of the prefabricated washroom structures is planned for Q4 2021. Signage will be installed in Q3 2021 to advise park users of the upcoming building demolition and subsequent installation of the Portland Loos.

Park Improvements – Public Engagement

In July 2019, the [Vancouver Fraser Port Authority \(VFPA\) announced a conditional donation of \\$1 million toward improvements to CRAB Park](#) to offset the impacts of the Centerm Expansion Project. Park Board and VFPA staff have coordinated a funding agreement for the project signed on December 2020.

Staff are currently refining a public engagement strategy that will launch summer 2021. Design of the improvements is anticipated to be complete by the end of Q2 2022, with implementation of

the improvements planned for Q4 2022. Based on the terms in the funding agreement related to park improvements, the VFPA requires park improvements be completed by 2023.

Healing Centre

For many years, members of the Indigenous community have expressed the need for a healing and wellness centre in the Downtown Eastside (DTES). The City's [DTES Plan](#) (2014) identified Indigenous place-making as an opportunity for supporting Indigenous communities in the DTES. There were three policies that were highlighted in section 6.14 of this report (page 59):

- *Foster strong relationships between the City and Aboriginal organizations and residents in the DTES towards ongoing collaboration and engagement in addressing neighbourhood issues and areas of common concern.*
- *Support the Aboriginal community in their pursuit of the establishment of an area or site of meaningful community activity and amenity.*
- *Explore partnerships and opportunities to develop inter-generational Aboriginal housing projects and a healing and wellness centre in Downtown Eastside.*

The plan did not specifically identify an Indigenous-focused healing centre at CRAB Park, however the image included in the document (see Figure 1 below) suggests a facility on the water. CRAB Park is the only publicly accessible waterfront in the DTES.



Figure 1: Artist impression of an Aboriginal (sic) focal point (Salish Sea Concept)

In March 2021, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs passed a [motion regarding improvements to CRAB Park](#) to address environmental and Indigenous concerns, which included the resolutions:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive and staff to work with local Host Nations, likeminded organizations and peoples to coordinate and advance improvements to CRAB park that align with Indigenous concerns and priorities and address pressing environmental concerns;



THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive to call upon the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority to work with local Host Nations and Indigenous organizations to establish an Indigenous healing lodge at CRAB park.

Despite support from Council, the Park Board, politicians at various levels of government, local advocacy groups, and representatives of the DTES, the development of an Indigenous focused healing centre at CRAB Park faces several challenges including:

- CRAB Park is located on land leased to the City of Vancouver by the VFPA;
- the terms of the current lease state that the land cannot be used for purposes other than parks and recreation, which has been confirmed in a recent meeting with the VFPA;
- CRAB Park has not been designated as a permanent park by resolution of Council.

Both the [Park Board motion](#) and [Council motion](#) approved in 2019 support a healing centre in CRAB Park, but neither specify who would fund, develop, and manage the facility and what the Park Board's role would be in the delivery or operation of this amenity.

As directed, Park Board staff have reached out to other City departments, including ACCS, regarding a healing centre at CRAB Park and the broader DTES to ensure coordination and to understand broader conversations related to developing supportive infrastructure for Indigenous peoples. ACCS have advised that there are two healing and wellness spaces being contemplated and funded by the City in the DTES. One is part of a housing redevelopment led by Aboriginal Land Trust where the City is contributing over \$2M in capital towards a healing and wellness space. The second is at 41 East Hastings; owned by Atira Housing, the owner is working with Vancouver Aboriginal Health and Indigenous women leaders to create a women's centred healing and wellness space. The City will contribute approximately \$700,000 to this project.

Park Board staff will continue these conversations and will also pursue opportunities for healing spaces in the park, guided by the upcoming public engagement process. Staff will continue to update the Board on these initiatives as they progress.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donnie Rosa'.

Donnie Rosa (*she/they*)
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/ln/clc

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team
Park Development
PB Communications