



June 6, 2022

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners
FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT : **Extreme Heat Mitigation and Preparedness – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners:

The purpose of this memo is to respond to the [Senior's Safety in a Climate Emergency motion](#) and provide an overview of the measures being taken this year in relation to extreme heat mitigation and preparedness as the warmer summer months approach.

Following the heat dome experienced in 2021, a cross-departmental working group hosted by the Vancouver Emergency Management Agency (VEMA) and City of Vancouver (CoV) developed some short-term actions that are being implemented now in an effort to be better prepared for summer heat events. Park Board staff have been actively involved.

The focus has been on developing and implementing neighbourhood-based solutions in priority areas to improve heat-response infrastructure, including indoor and outdoor cooling spaces (both civic and non-civic) and access to water. To identify the priority areas, staff are using spatial information including, but not limited to, temperature, heat vulnerability, and demographics. In the short term, the priority work will include addressing indoor cooling, outdoor cooling, and access to water, transportation support, heat wellness checks, and community needs assessment. Responses have been prioritized based on equity zones and heat related calls to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in 2021.

Key Short-term Parks & Recreation Actions

- Recreation Services will expand its network of indoor cooling options by purchasing portable air conditioning units and creating cooling rooms at seven (7) community centres: Champlain, Coal Harbour, Hastings, Kensington, Renfrew, Thunderbird and Trout Lake; this is in addition to the ten (10) existing cooling sites, which include Britannia, Hillcrest, Kerrisdale, Killarney, Marpole-Oakridge, Mount Pleasant, RayCam, Roundhouse, Sunset, and West End.
- Park Operations will expand its network of outdoor cooling spaces/water accessibility by fabricating temporary drinking fountains and misters to deploy at priority parks based on identified need.
- Recreation Services will activate spray parks/splash pads and wading pools earlier in the season in priority zones.

Short-term Actions by Cross-departmental Project Group

The following items include multiple short-term actions that will support both seniors and people with disabilities, including those that are vulnerable and isolated.

- Engaging with non-profit organizations and community serving groups to develop and implement solutions that support seniors, people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically



diverse community groups, and those who need transportation support to access cooling centres.

- Improving access to cooling/clean air centres by providing space for pets and belongings; offering overnight hours and removing barriers generally.
- Reaching out to housing organizations prior to extreme heat events to share information about steps they can take to reduce the impacts of heat events on residents.
- Maintaining a stockpile of bottled water that will be distributed during extreme heat.
- Implementing an internal Extreme Heat Event Communication Plan that will guide the communication, planning, and execution of heat response activities internally.
- Working with partners, such as health authorities and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), to ensure effective public communication of heat alerts and warnings.
- Developing a process and identifying funding to enable neighbourhood Peer Networks to support communities during response to heat events. Peer supports have been integral in getting information out and guiding people to cooler locations.
- Releasing one-time Resilient Neighbourhoods Grants for community-based organizations to collaborate with the City on extreme heat planning, purchasing equipment, conducting training, and supporting extreme heat preparedness and response in 2022.
- Planting street trees in areas known to be heat islands, such as East Hastings, using Climate Levy funding approved by Council in the 2022 budget.

In summary, Park Board staff have been working closely with the Extreme Heat Mitigation and Preparedness project team, and collaborating across all CoV departments in order to prepare for the upcoming warmer summer months and the possibility of extreme heat events. Staff are prepared to support these initiatives and to be ready to roll out the short term preparedness plans.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donnie Rosa', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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

/lb/clc

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
PB Recreation Leadership Team
PB Communications