



July 17, 2022

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **PB Staff to Maintain All Parks Motion Report Back – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to report back on the member motion titled [Park Board Staff to Maintain all Public Parks under Park Board Jurisdiction](#), which was referred to staff provide information regarding potential impacts on horticultural services. The referred motion included the following recommendations:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board have fully qualified Park Board staff maintain and carry-out all work for any future, or proposed 'airspace' parks, similar to, but not including the new 'airspace' park at Oakridge Centre Mall with the Westbank development, or in all parks that are in any way different from traditional, surface parks;
- B. THAT the Vancouver Park Board write management of the Oakridge development to request that Park Board staff be contracted to carry-out work in the new park at Oakridge Centre; and
- C. THAT only Park Board staff maintain and tend Vancouver Park Board public parks, and lands under Park Board jurisdiction.

A. Maintenance of Future Airspace Parks

As outlined in the [May 2021 briefing memo](#) reporting back on the prior [similar motion](#) that was referred to staff in February 2021, the decision to assign maintenance responsibility of the airspace park at Oakridge Centre Mall to the owner was based upon financial, legal, risk management and operational advice from City and Park Board staff. As site complexity and infrastructure of any future airspace park proposals will vary considerably, park design and maintenance requirements will need to be evaluated and determined specific to each project.

B. Maintenance of the New Oakridge Centre Park

As referenced above, maintenance of the new park at Oakridge Centre is the responsibility of the owner. Key to this decision was the park's location on top of a complex mall structure that presents inherent and uncertain risk of damage to the structure, vendor property, and of bodily injury to mall patrons and staff. Additionally, the new park includes a variety of features that together exceed the scale, scope, and complexity of any green roofs currently maintained by Park Board staff. The design was based on the understanding that the owner would be maintaining the park after delivery and also be responsible for the significant capital renewal/replacement costs of these elements.

A request could be submitted to the owner to consider contracting this maintenance work to the Park Board once the project is complete, however considerations and risk mitigations regarding capital renewal, operational budgets, insurance costs, and any significant uncertain risk and liability would need to be fully addressed and funded.



C. Only Park Board Staff to Maintain Parks - Horticultural Services

The majority of horticultural work is performed by Park Board staff, however there are some situations where the use of external contractors may be required for specialized services, or when it offers a more cost effective and efficient response due to equipment, capacity, or timing needs. For example, during major storms and extreme weather events, damages and safety hazards increase workload volumes beyond regular staff capacity. Hiring external contractors assists with responding more promptly to issues that require immediate and enhanced service delivery.

As well, at times it is more cost effective and efficient for contractors to undertake certain maintenance projects that require extra staff or specialized equipment that may not be needed on a regular basis. This includes time-sensitive sport field and golf course projects such as turf aeration and top dressing. Top dressing levels the surface and aeration creates channels for open air and drainage, while allowing water to reach the grass roots. In order to complete this work within a limited timeframe to reduce user impacts, larger scale equipment and additional staff resources are required. As these services are performed at maximum twice a year, purchasing and maintaining equipment that would not be regularly used is not cost effective. Additionally, it would require diverting existing staff resources away from regular maintenance.

Hydrovac services are another example of periodic, project specific work that is more effectively managed by contracting out. Hydrovac trucks use high-pressure water and industrial strength vacuums to safely excavate and extract dirt and debris to expose underground utilities and other infrastructure. This service is primarily utilized for seasonal tree planting and utility work projects.

Contract Services Committee

Park Board and City staff regularly assess evolving operational needs to determine how best to provide service. In 2012, CUPE 1004 and the City agreed to create a joint Contracted Services Committee to examine services contracted to external vendors that could instead be performed by CUPE 1004 members. This joint committee is comprised of both union and employer representation, with the Director of Parks representing Park Board interests. The committee reviews opportunities for alternative approaches to the use of external vendors for specific services based on a number of factors, such as: improved value for the City/Park Board; improved service delivery; reduced risk or impacts to public/users, etc. When the joint committee agrees that a particular service should be provided by union staff instead of being contracted out, recommendations are presented to the relevant department heads for implementation.

It is important to note that while staff will continue to provide the majority of park operational work, the flexibility to use external contractors is still required. As such, the best practice for determining when contracted work can be handled differently is through the established joint committee review process.

Regards,

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

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

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Copy to: PB Leadership Team, PB Communications