



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City Council Receives Final Report from Park Board Transition Working Group

VANCOUVER, BC - Today, City Council marked an exciting chapter in its journey to welcome a new era for Parks and Recreation as they received the final report from the Park Board Transition Working Group. This report sets the stage for improved services, stronger protections for green spaces, and significant cost savings for taxpayers, aligning Vancouver's governance model with all other Canadian cities.

"This is about more than just governance - it's about building a Vancouver that works better for everyone," said Mayor Ken Sim. "By streamlining decision-making and eliminating inefficiencies, we're creating a system that prioritizes what matters most: protecting and enhancing our cherished parks and recreational spaces."

The transition is projected to save \$70 million over the next decade, with further savings expected as the process progresses. Another key outcome will be an additional 89 acres of permanent parkland, including iconic areas like David Lam Park and the remaining sections of Stanley Park. This would mark the largest designation of permanent parkland in Vancouver in the past 30 years.

In addition to safeguarding parkland, the transition addresses longstanding inefficiencies caused by the dual governance system. These inefficiencies have led to costly delays, increasing construction expenses by about \$15 million in the City's current capital plan. Streamlining decision-making will prevent such setbacks, leading to better outcomes for residents and community groups.

The report also highlights the need for improved community engagement. With a majority of stakeholders reporting no interaction with a Park Board commissioner over the past year, the report recommends creating a Parks and Recreation Sub-Committee and a Community Partner Relations Office to strengthen relationships and improve accountability. These new structures would provide community groups and stakeholders with a clear and consistent point of contact, ensuring strong relationships and ongoing collaboration, regardless of who is in office.

"The future of Vancouver's parks and recreation services goes beyond any one person or political party - it's about protecting what makes our city special," said Mayor Sim. "Our parks and recreation facilities are the heart of our city, and we have a responsibility to preserve and care for them, ensuring they remain vibrant and accessible for generations to come."

With Premier David Eby and the Province's commitment to making the necessary Vancouver Charter amendments in the spring session, and the support from Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation, City Council is prepared to move forward with this transformative change. Mayor and Council will continue to work closely with City staff, Parks and Recreation staff, Indigenous partners, senior government officials, and community stakeholders to implement the recommendations made in the report to ensure a smooth and seamless transition process.

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Supporting Quotes:

“This transition will be a big win for taxpayers and a big step forward for how Vancouver operates. Integrating Parks and Recreation into the City's budgeting and operational process means real savings, more efficient management, and a modernized approach to serving Vancouverites. The Park Board has become an anachronism, and this transition is about doing what makes sense for our city now, and for the future.” - Senator Larry Campbell – Mayor of Vancouver (COPE) 2002-2005; Canadian Senator from British Columbia (Liberal/Independent) 2005-2023

“I know how much Vancouver's parks mean to our city and its people. Transitioning Parks and Recreation under City Council's direct oversight is the right move, aligning us with cities across Canada. This change focuses on what matters most - keeping our green spaces vibrant, protected, and ready for the future.” - Premier Mike Harcourt, Mayor of Vancouver (TEAM) 1981-1986; Premier of British Columbia (NDP) 1991-1996

“We live in a time when all governments are taking too much. It is refreshing to see this City Council taking steps to find more cost effective solutions. Change is always difficult but this is a change that protects valued park assets while reducing the cost of government to all of us.” - Premier Gordon Campbell – Mayor of Vancouver (NPA) 1986-1993; Premier of British Columbia (BC Liberal) 2001-2011

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