

For Immediate Release
December 14, 2023

Launching 'A New Era for Vancouver's Parks and Recreation': City Announces Major Park Management Reforms

Vancouver, BC – December 14, 2023 -- In a landmark decision yesterday evening, Vancouver City Council took a monumental step forward that will fundamentally reshape and modernize the city's parks and recreation system.

Yesterday's vote is the first step towards bringing parks and recreation under the direct oversight of Council, with the objective to enhance operational efficiency and community involvement. The City of Vancouver owns or leases all park land, but generally the care of these parks is delegated to the Park Board.

Mayor Ken Sim, who brought this motion forward, said the initiative will bring forward 'A New Era for Vancouver's Parks' by eliminating the separate park board structure and the administrative duplication that has proven unworkable in recent years.

"The new structure will ensure we can effectively deliver the parks and recreation services Vancouverites deserve," said Mayor Sim. "We are committed to a transparent transition process and adhering to all regulatory processes.

Notably, the motion approved by Council yesterday seeks to enshrine stronger protections for parks and greenspaces. There are a number of parks across the city that are currently designated as temporary parks or greenspaces under the custody, care and management of Park Board. The motion directs staff to accelerate the work being done to transition these parks and greenspaces to permanent park status and ensure their protection for future generations.

In a statement earlier today, Minister of Municipal Affairs Anne Kang said: "We respect the decision of Vancouver City Council on the future of the Park Board. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs will begin work with the City to move forward on this significant change to governance in Vancouver. There are a number of items that need to be addressed including land ownership and the future of the workers at the Park Board, and we need to make sure First Nations are consulted. We are asking the City of Vancouver to provide the Province with a transition plan to address these considerations so that we can move forward together."

The decision by Vancouver City Council will align our parks and recreation governance structure with all other major cities in the country.

Media contact:

Maria Veras, Press Secretary

Office of the Mayor

maria.veras@vancouver.ca

Background on Park Status in the City of Vancouver:

The Vancouver Charter provides for three categories of parks, and there are specific rules for how park land can be “designated” under each category. The category determines how much jurisdiction the Park Board has over the park land and the process for changing its use.

1. Permanent Public Park (488(1) of the Charter) - Under the exclusive jurisdiction and control of the Park Board. Change of use requires a 2/3 vote by both City Council and Park Board.
2. Temporary Public Park (488(2) of the Charter) – Under the exclusive jurisdiction and control of Park Board. Change of use requires a 2/3 vote of City Council.
3. Custody, Care and Management (488(3)) – Powers prescribed by Council are granted to Park Board. Change of powers granted to Park Board requires a majority vote of City Council.