



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2024

Vancouver Mayor Ken Sim Unveils Park Board Transition Working Group

VANCOUVER, BC - Today, Mayor Ken Sim introduced the Park Board Transition Working Group, tasked with overseeing the transition in managing Vancouver's parks and recreation. This follows a recent motion at the end of 2023, requesting the Provincial government to dissolve the elected Park Board.

"This step is long overdue," stated Mayor Ken Sim. "The current system is broken, and no amount of tweaking will fix it. Bringing parks and recreation under the direct oversight of City Council aligns us with how it's done in every other city in the country."

Mayor Sim announced the following members of the Park Board Transition Working Group, each connected to Vancouver's parks and recreation:

- Catherine Evans, Former Park Board Commissioner for Vision Vancouver
- Jordan Nijjar, Soccer Coach and Leader in the South Asian Community
- Shauna Wilton, Former Deputy Park Board GM and Interim Park Board GM
- Jennifer Wood, Director of BC Diving
- Gregor Young, Executive Director of Vancouver United Football Club

"The working group members announced today bring a wealth of experience and knowledge, ensuring a smooth transition," affirmed Mayor Sim. "This change is about managing these spaces more effectively, not compromising them. It's about prioritizing the needs of all Vancouverites and ensuring our parks and recreation facilities can serve our community to their fullest potential."

In a collaborative effort, First Nations have been actively engaged in the transition process. Notably, the Musqueam Indian Band has officially conveyed their endorsement through a formal letter of support.

The Park Board Transition Working Group will operate within the framework of their terms of reference, guiding their efforts and outlining the overarching objectives. Mayor Sim concluded, "I

am excited for this next phase and continuing to work with our provincial partners to ensure a brighter future for Vancouver and our parks."

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Park Board Transition Working Group Members

Catherine Evans



Catherine Evans was elected Park Board Commissioner in Vancouver from 2014 to 2018, was chair of the Vancouver Public Library from 2011 to 2014, and has held a variety of senior policy and management roles in the governments of both British Columbia and Ontario.

Catherine is also an active community member volunteering and serving on the boards of a wide range of organizations including the BC Society of Landscape Architects, BC Society for Public Education, Vancouver Public Library and Library Foundation, Canadian Women Voters Congress, and Homes First Society, among others.

In addition to her public sector and volunteer work, Catherine has experience as a lawyer, a consultant, and as co-owner of Ethos Strategy Group – a former communications and public relations firm in Vancouver. In early 2022 she was appointed Chancellor of the Vancouver School of Theology.

Jordan Nijjar



Jordan Nijjar is a proud fourth-generation Vancouverite. Growing up in the heart of South Vancouver, he attended Moberly Elementary and later graduated from David Thompson Secondary. His family ties, dating back to the 1950s, connect him deeply to Vancouver. His grandparents and parents have been an integral part of the local community, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity.

After completing his education, Jordan pursued further studies at Langara College. He found his professional calling at Vancity Community Credit Union, contributing to the local community.

Jordan's compassion extends beyond the workplace. Volunteering with the Vancouver Crisis Center, he provides support and empathy to those in need. This commitment to community welfare showcases his belief in making a positive impact beyond the professional realm.

Beyond his professional endeavours, Jordan is actively involved in community service. He has been instrumental in organising spring and summer youth camps for the Khalsa Diwan Society Sikh Temple, providing enriching experiences for the younger generation.

Shauna Wilton



Shauna brings extensive experience and dedication to her roles, having served as a City of Vancouver employee from 2014 to 2020. In her final position as Acting General Manager of the Vancouver Park Board, she showcased her leadership skills. Prior to that, Shauna spent four years as the Deputy GM, a role she assumed after playing a pivotal role in key initiatives, including the renegotiation of the Community Centre Association's Joint Operating Agreement. Shauna holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Wilfrid Laurier University.

Throughout her 25 year career, she has held key leadership positions in both private and public sectors, including strong community involvement volunteering on several boards of directors spanning the arts, mentoring, and amateur sport. Beyond her professional pursuits, she is also known as an avid golfer.

Shauna is currently the Vice President of Event Operations for the PNE, a role she assumed in June 2023.

Jennifer Wood



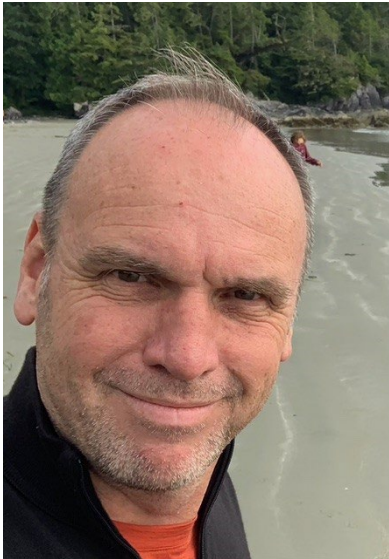
Jennifer Wood, a born and raised Vancouverite, has been a lifelong user of the city's parks and recreational facilities. From childhood experiences of learning to swim and skate in community facilities to exploring new sports on city courts as an adult, she continues to embrace Vancouver's park resources. As a mother to four active children and two dogs, Jennifer's daily life involves utilizing park space for various activities such as soccer, tennis, swimming, and dog walking.

In her role as Board Director for BC Diving, Jennifer has developed an interest in aquatic sports and infrastructure, with special interest in the renewal of the Vancouver Aquatic Centre. She also has a relationship with Swim BC governance.

With a lifelong appreciation of green spaces, an academic background in molecular ecology and a recently developed interest in birding, Jennifer has a strong interest in protecting natural spaces and their inhabitants.

Jennifer is excited to be involved in the process of transitioning the custody of our city's natural spaces and the management of associated community resources

Gregor Young



Gregor Young, a Vancouver resident since emigrating from Scotland at 10 months old, has immersed himself in the city's sports culture. His athletic journey saw him excel in soccer, hockey, and lacrosse at competitive levels during his teenage years. Ultimately, he devoted himself to soccer, playing varsity at UBC for five years while earning a degree in Political Science. His dedication to the sport even led him to represent the men's national team twice.

With 20 years of full-time experience in youth soccer, Gregor serves as the Executive Director for Vancouver United FC, a prominent youth soccer club. His role involves extensive interaction with Park Board officials and staff. For the past two years, he has contributed his expertise as a member of the Park Board External Advisory Board for Field Strategy. Gregor's involvement extends beyond Vancouver United FC, as he actively participates in various committees at the club, district, league, and BC Soccer levels.

His commitment to fostering teamwork and providing youth with enriching experiences underscores the fundamental goal of his work.

Terms of Reference

Context

As directed by the Council motion of [December 14, 2023 \(pp 18-21\)](#), a Parks and Recreation Transition Working Group (“Working Group”) (Type D advisory body) is to be convened to facilitate the smooth transition of responsibility for parks and recreation services from the current oversight by an elected Park Board to oversight by Council.

Purpose

The Working Group will provide recommendations and feedback to Council on efficient, effective, and meaningful pathways for community engagement with and input to Council in its proposed governance role for parks and recreation services. Matters related to legal commitments, operations, services, strategy, policy issues other than governance and engagement, and labour relations are out of scope.

Key Activities

1. Continue engagement with local First Nations regarding Council’s proposed governance of parks.
2. Gather and review feedback from stakeholders regarding considerations and options for stakeholder engagement related to Council’s proposed governance of parks and recreation services.
3. Review current Park Board governance and Board-community relations practices and governance models from other municipalities with respect to community engagement.
4. Develop options and advice for meaningful, effective, and efficient processes for public input to Council regarding governance of parks and recreations services.
5. Facilitate smooth transition to new governance processes.

Guiding Principles

- Working Group members will ensure a space of mutual respect and provide opportunities to learn from the expertise and perspective of all members.
- Minutes and presentation materials will be posted publicly as appropriate.

Timeline, Membership and Supports

Timeline: Commencing late January 2024, and to continue for a term of six months.

Membership: All members of the Working Group will be appointed by Council, and should include:

- The Mayor
- Two (2) members of Council
- Mayor's Chief of Staff
- One (1) Park Board Commissioner
- Up to six (6) members of the public

Resources and Supports: The following staff will support the Working Group

- Executive Leads: City Manager Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager Sandra Singh General Manager, Park Board Steve Jackson
- Administrative staff to support activities such as scheduling, documentation, and expense reimbursement as per standard practice for Council Advisory Committees.
- Subject matter experts to provide information to the Working Group on governance implementation considerations such as background on Park Board governance practices, practices in other municipalities, the Vancouver Charter, City Council operations, community access to City Council, and Council communications processes.



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January 8, 2024

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

RE: Musqueam support for proposed folding of elected Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

Musqueam fully supports Vancouver City Council's proposal to eliminate the elected Vancouver Park Board to enable city council authority over all parks and recreation services in Vancouver.

Musqueam's relationship with Mayor Ken Sim and his team is based in reconciliation between the City of Vancouver and Musqueam Indian Band. I know under Vancouver City Council's management, parks and recreation will run more effectively and reconciliation will always be at the forefront of their decision-making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chief Wayne Sparrow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chief Wayne Sparrow