

VanSplash Advisory Group Meeting Four

March 11, 2019, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Members in attendance: Anthony Abrahams, Jean Campbell, Kaye Chapman, Cliff Cheng, Michael DiPietro, Dale Edwards, Abby Ferris, Samantha Garrett, Carol Martin, Anthony Mehnert, Barry Morris, Stevie Nguyen, Arthur Tsai, Jarrett Vaughan, Marianne Wieland de Alvarez, Peter Wong

Members in attendance by telephone: Igor Kopecky and Charles Tai

Regrets: Bronwen Mears

Park Board staff in attendance: Leila Todd, VanSplash Project Manager, Sean Healy, Supervisor of Aquatic Services

Other Presenters: Melissa Higgs, HCMA Architecture + Design

Third-party facilitator and notetaker: Jennifer Miller, Abbey-Jane McGrath

Summary of Meeting

Welcome, agenda review and housekeeping:

- Facilitator reviewed binders for each member, containing: Advisory Group process framework, Terms of Reference, meeting notes, VanSplash strategy content
- Facilitator: one of the group members, Catherine Rose, has been unable to join the meetings so far. We had a conversation and came to agreement that she would not join us. Our suggestion is to proceed with 19 members. Opens to questions and comments; none received.
- Leila: memo from manager of energy and utilities management to Board “Second Beach Solar Panels and Renewable Strategy for City Facilities.” Swimming pools have high greenhouse gas emissions in relation to other facilities. Energy use and greenhouse gas emissions is one aspect of facilities planning in VanSplash. As part of renewable energy strategy, solar panels will be installed on the Second Beach concession stand.
- Advisory Group Member: Who is paying for the panels?
- Staff: Typically these would be paid for by the City – but would save on utilities costs.
- Facilitator: Purpose of today’s meeting to collect input on draft VanSplash Vision, Principles and Goals. Next meeting will be input on draft recommendations
- Facilitator reviewed the agenda for the meeting
- Facilitator: reminds of Code of Conduct as agreed upon by members
- Facilitator: reminds of Advisory Group Mandate
 - To review and provide insights on DRAFT VanSplash Strategy and provide feedback and insights on this as well as amendments proposed by Board, and concerns raised by the community

What is Consensus?:

- Facilitator: What is Consensus? It is not 100% agreement, it is not majority rule, it is the lack of disagreement. You might hear me ask, if there is anyone who disagrees? You might get some things, might compromise, and might be able to live with other aspects. Implies compromise and cooperation.
- Do you want to aim for consensus?
- Advisory Group Member: what are other options to consensus?

- Facilitator:
 1. Could have laundry list of input and don't have to worry about reaching consensus as a group; some of the feedback could be contradictory
 2. Or I would ask are you able to live with this as a group and we would not have anything contradictory in the input
- Advisory Group Member: Was consensus used to come up with the Draft Strategy?
- Staff: Yes – but no advisory group, would have been consensus among parks board staff and the consultant (the working group). This advisory group is a unique setting
- Advisory Group Member: reaching consensus takes more time. Having said that, would like to try to do that
- Advisory Group Member: try to achieve consensus, but dissent with good rationale should be included in minutes or final report – to reflect people's different backgrounds
- Facilitator: If we are mostly good with it, but there is some dissent with rationale, this should be on the record as well – this is one approach. If we can reach consensus as a group and put together a cohesive set of feedback, this does make it easier for the Board to action the feedback. Gives advisory group more of an opportunity for a legacy.
- Advisory Group Member: concern with enough time for consensus.
- Facilitator: there is an option for an additional meeting if the group wants that.
- Facilitator: If there is an impasse, I will ask you what you want to do about it. It is your process and I will guide you, but it is your work
- ***It was determined that advisory group would like to try to reach consensus***

Presentation: Vision, Principles and Goals: Context, Background, Where they came from

Melissa and Leila

- Melissa: Vision is the North Star – high level aspirations
- One level below is Principles – still aspirational
- Goals: Starting to become more actionable and should be able to track to recommendations and whether being achieved
- How did we get to this Vision, Principles and Goals?
 - 2001 Aquatic Strategy was the previous measure of success; it did not have visions, principles and goals; focused on meeting future demands of city's populations and balancing regional needs with city as a whole
 - 2016: Broader aspirations – Greenest City Action Plan, Engaged City task Force, interested in expanding definition of aquatics, looked globally for inspiration to bring this learning into document
 - VanSplash lives within broader strategy, too: Park Board Strategy, Parks and Recreation Master Plan (VanPlay)
 - VanSplash Public Engagement
 - a lot of the vision and principles questions were in the first round of engagement
 - second round was an opportunity to see if the draft vision and principles resonated
- Many meetings and internal committees informed the final strategy

Questions regarding the content or how developed:

- Advisory Group member: is the word coastal in the vision intentionally speaking to beaches?
- Staff: Yes, providing aquatic services on the edge of the ocean, distinct to Vancouver.
- Advisory Group member: what does “highly livable” mean - high income? More inclusive?
- Staff: definitely the latter: how do we remove as many barriers as possible and make accessible?
- Advisory Group Member: what does “flexible and functional facilities” mean in Goal Number 6?
- Staff: Flexible to allow for range of activities based on layout, size, etc. Functional is to operate services and facilities in a cost-effective way.
- Advisory Group Member: asks about reference to visitors in vision statement
- Staff: desire to recognize that city has a huge number of visitors, not just those who live here.
- Advisory Group Member: definition of vision and how it counteracts with mission. Vision Statement is aspirational, what is there is more of a mission statement. Vision as desired state. Mission statement is how you get there. Delivery part is in the mission.
- Advisory Group Member: does the same approach to vision and mission apply here as in other organizations?
- Staff: happy for the group to talk about whether this is the best way to go about this. It is a 25-year plan. What you want to achieve in 25 years. The vision is meant to guide the work.
- Advisory Group Member: principle #4: does this “well-being” include social interaction?
- Staff: Yes.
- Advisory Group Member: vision is ambitious, but have to put limited resources in the context. This is difficult to do without idea of resources that we have to work with.
- Staff: vision is supposed to be the fun part: come up with ideas even if aspirational. Resources should not limit the vision at this stage.
- Facilitator: team and park board staff would have considered are these possible within the overarching park board strategy, VanPlay strategy, and other constraints/parameters such as budgets.
- Staff: yes, there was a vetting process with operational staff involvement
- Facilitator: if group feedback starts getting unrealistic, staff’s role is to step in and let you know something might not be possible
- Advisory Group Member: Principle 1: Water only one component of experience – what does this mean; what other components are there?
- Staff: when we think of what attracts people to beach, for example – many people go to beach and do not go in the water. thinking beyond the water when creating the vision – thinking beyond the pool tank.
- Advisory Group member: it’s the change rooms, decks, high heat areas – cooling areas. Going to kits pool to tan, etc.

Advisory Group Feedback on the Vision

- Facilitator: We now want to collect your feedback, starting with the Vision. We are collecting feedback, trying to reach consensus and aiming to move on from here to the recommendations – we are not planning to come back to this content. We are also not here to wordsmith this content. What we are getting to is: Is the content meaningful, appropriate and useful for the strategy?

- Facilitator: What do you like and not like about the vision? Vision: deliver a wide range of aquatic experiences for residents and visitors that support Vancouver as a highly-livable, world-class coastal city
- Advisory Group Member: I like it. Inclusive and wide in scope
- Advisory Group Member: it is really well written and inspiring; allows me to get excited about living in this city and inviting friends and relatives to city
- Advisory Group Member: I have a hard time with world-class. Would rather see it say highly livable. Also, visitors not as important as citizens who live here. Pretentious.
- Advisory Group Member: makes me proud to be part of city; like balance of highly livable as offsetting world-class, visitors and residence. Balanced
- Advisory Group member: I have a problem with world class; this seems to be about what world thinks about us instead of what it is like living here
- Advisory Group Member: I am in agreement with world class and visitors. But like the coastal reference as this is Vancouver.
- Advisory Group Member: inspiring and unique. I do get the world- class thing though: don't want to go viral and be not great for citizens
- Advisory Group Member: "world leading" could be a way to hold ourselves to a standard, instead of being externally-focused. Fits a visionary statement.
- Advisory Group Member: Just because it is world-class does not mean not focus on needs of locals, could mean still functional for the people.
- Staff: accessibility is what we are known for at global conferences. Picking up on world-leading
- Advisory Group Member: I like that the vision touches on the unique difference experiences in the word wide-range. Would like to see the vision capture on the uniqueness of Vancouver – as opposed to an international standard of what is unique
- Advisory Group Member: vision is a plus but I worry about money – are we diverting money from swimming pools to pie in the sky ideas
- Visitors: most of us come here as a visitor. To reach out to people from outside city as being welcoming to people moving here, people visiting here, this visitor piece is important
- Advisory Group Member: visitors are coming and we are going to have to assess them as users: because they are coming and affect our use of these spaces, particularly splash parks and beaches
- Advisory Group Member: I suggest including word "affordable" in front of aquatics and replacing "widely accessible" in stead of highly-livable
- Advisory Group Member: It is a fine vision statement but is very broad and if we developed good facilities that are good for residents would also be good for visitors. Too broad.
- Advisory Group Member: I like the vision. Like idea of wide-range, like visitors and residents, world-class also liked.

Suggestions for the vision:

- Changing world-class to world-leading – *group agrees*
- International Standard – *group agrees world-leading covers this*
- What is unique about Vancouver – *members suggest the existing word "coastal" covers this; group agrees no addition needed*
- Add affordable in front of aquatic

- Instead of “affordable” put “accessible” aquatic experiences? - “accessible aquatic experiences”
- One member disagrees – not broad enough; concern about affordable getting lost in accessible
- Read with wide-range could change this.
- Is there a glossary? – not currently
- *Group agrees to add “accessible”*
- Widely accessible instead of highly livable
- Replace Deliver with “provide access” to a wide range of aquatic experiences...
- Some of these words are “coming up” in the principles and goals

Revised vision proposed by the group: ***Deliver a wide range of accessible aquatic experiences for residents and visitors that support Vancouver as a highly-livable, world-leading city.***

Group Brainstorm on Principles and Goals – Flip Chart Input Written by Members

- Facilitator: Go to the principle or goal you most want to provide feedback on. Chat with other members who are gathered there. Write likes and dislikes on flip chart. Then move on to next one. Try to comment on as many as you can. We will talk about those with the most comments in whole group, so this is also a prioritization exercise

Principle 1: Recognize that water is only one component of the experience	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The idea behind this principle is a valid one to not forget. If we are considering “water” = pool/ocean ● Wonderful to acknowledge that the steps to finding out, getting to, getting into, getting out of the water is part of the aquatic experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most important is the water ● Hard to understand if water is a component, what other components will there be? Example ● +1 Physical? Cultural? Psychological? Spiritual? ... ● Weird to put in a principle with a word “only” instead of components such as water, X, Y, Z

Principle 2: Expand the definition of “aquatics” to include beaches, wading parks, spray parks and new innovative aquatic experiences	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10-metre diving ● Swimming ponds ● Diving decks ● Sauna ● Floating pools ● Cooling stations – temporary/seasonal ● “New” is exciting (allows/invites imagination of what’s possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should other types of possible aquatic experiences be described in blanket form by “innovative”? Waterfall sprays, ice tanks etc. – less innovative and found in other facilities

Principle 3: Enhance social inclusion through aquatic experiences	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More open areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everybody comes to the pool to be sociable. What about solitude, privacy? • About having options (a range of opportunities to engage socially, including inter/cross-generations) (if you want with mutual consent) • Add “opportunities for” – i.e. Enhance opportunities for social inclusion...

Principle 4: Support community and personal well-being	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is of utmost significance and relevancy, as it is about individuals and the local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does “well-being” cover – and who’s well-being? For some, wellbeing is about being able to get really clean, engage in personal rituals, etc.

Goal 1: Continue to increase annual swims per capita	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More pools around city to increase accessibility • Yes!!! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more pools (especially neighbourhood ones) and more capacity to existing pools (to decrease congestions) • Specific goal to increase from x to y • Need more pool time • Need more outdoor neighbourhood swimming pools

Goal 2: Accommodate Vancouver’s growing and aging population	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver Tsunami • Seniors pool best activities • Flexible throughout time – waves of aging • Need neighbourhood pools, so it is easy for seniors to get there. Walk! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate + accommodate (with all age demographics) rather than “othering” our elders • Accessibility to and from pools • What about population changing in needs and preferences and expectations? • Add demographics of city to accommodate

Goal 3: Provide a wide range of vibrant and engaging aquatic experiences	
Likes	Dislikes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to get encourage through outreach to First Nations – what has been done? • Shouldn’t the goal be to increase that number or make it more engaging • + services needed

Goal 4: Provide aquatic experiences that are accessible to all	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As long as accessible includes being able to walk to the pool for the greatest number of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At all facilities? Community access by community What has been done to encourage Musqueam to pools? Who is all? Tourists

Goal 5: Promote and encourage active living through aquatics	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates community Yes but you need more pools to do this – indoor and out – some of our pools are over capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you measure this? Be more specific Living = lifestyles? For all age groups

Goal 6: Provide flexible and functional facilities	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-function of our pools and beaches Lessons, rentals, private events, fundraisers, etc. 	

Goal 7: Establish sustainability targets for aquatics	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This, as I understood, is the most important goal of all Sustainability must be a target. Particularly in terms of financial constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happens to chlorine in pools; where does it go? Creeks and rivers are affected negatively. What kind of treatment plants? Is it tertiary?

Goal 8: Increase connection to nature in all aspects of aquatics	
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swimming ponds and outdoor pools Floating swimming decks Love this. The environment of Vancouver is known to be really beautiful – should take advantage of this. I love gazing out the windows at the forest at Renfrew Park pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seems out of sync with the strategy. While I think that connecting to nature is a vital part of life and harder in cities, I don't see that as the function of aquatics facilities and certainly not all facilities – beaches maybe

Whole-Group Discussion on Principles and Goals

Goal One: Continue to increase annual swims per capita

- The suggestion is to have a goal of x number of new pools
- Staff: more specific recommendations come out of the goals. The recommendations are specific about new pools; the strategy also includes a target number of annual swims per capita
- Advisory Group Member: What type of pools?
- Advisory Group Member: Do think the goal is a good one. But should be more specific – could be five swims and it is increased
- Facilitator: does a specific number around swims per capita improve this goal?
- Advisory Group Member: none of these goals are measurable. That is the purpose of the recommendations. The goals are to guide the recommendations.
- Advisory Group Member: would say yes to goal, but not at risk of increased congestion at existing facilities, or increased exclusivity
- Facilitator: are there other suggested changes to this goal to make more acceptable?
- Advisory Group Member: good experiences are going to need to be available in order to increase numbers. You get to this goal by making better experiences – the goal works as a guide
- Advisory Group Member: Kerrisdale – is this the lowest swim per capita? Likely because no sauna, gym room.
- Facilitator: for those who are not ok with goal number one, how can we change it?
- Advisory Group Member: Would want to see all goals SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound
- Advisory Group Member: would it be possible to come back to the goals after the recommendations to see if they support the recommendations?
- Facilitator: How do others feel about this? (nodding heads)

- Facilitator: are there any goals you are not comfortable with?

Goal Number Four Discussion: (Provide Aquatic Experiences that are Accessible to All).

- Advisory Group Member: goal number four seems expensive
- Advisory Group Member: important to add words “to all communities” or “residents” – suggestion to add the word communities at the end of goal four.
- Discussion about whether word community narrows the goal too much. From a competitive standpoint, it’s unrealistic to aim for that for all communities. Aquatic experiences to all – communities seems to limit it to non-competitive facilities. We need access not just for communities, but also athletes.
- Advisory Group Member: suggestion to add language like accessible by walking, cycling, etc.
- Facilitator: coming to different definitions of accessible – to area, to type of mobility/transportation
- Advisory Group Member: Is there a definition of accessible that City uses?
- Staff: access also has cultural components as well, there is language used but not one definition
- Facilitator: different definitions of accessible
- Facilitator: how does it change the meaning of the goal if we add the word community?

- Facilitator: I'm not trying to put forward suggestions on your behalf, but perhaps a suggestion could be to add a glossary to the strategy? Could potentially help with questions around definitions of words.
- Several group members said "yes" or other indication of agreement
- Advisory Group Member: I think we should leave this goal as-is, because it's most inclusive
- Facilitator: is everyone ok with this? Yes.

Facilitator: We are almost out of time; how would the group like to spend remainder of time?

Advisory Group Member: let's spend the remaining time on what is missing and then revisit the goals and principles after we've talked about the recommendations

What Else? Anything Missing from Vision, Principles and Goals?

- Advisory Group Member: main concern is within broad spectrum of vision statement would like to be ongoing **support of competitive swimming**. The Vancouver Aquatic Centre needs to be replaced and there is no other feasible City facility for holding a competition. I'd like to see support for competitive swimming included as a goal or a principle.
- Facilitator: The principles and goals are not addressing specific facilities; I think you may be getting into recommendations
- Advisory Group Member: All of these goals are very forward thinking, but **replacement of what is already there is important too** – continued service. Not saying that we should keep old pools where it's more expensive to maintain than replace, but we need to maintain current capacity/service
- Advisory Group Member: nothing about starting improvement projects and **reducing existing negatives like cleanliness and overcrowding**. The bulk of the recommendations are forward looking and about opening or closing facilities, however surely a big aspect of the new strategy should be focused on improving what we have.
- Advisory Group Member: not everybody comes to the pool to be social. **Solitude is a worthy goal as well.**
- Advisory Group Member: There is currently no reference to any demographic in the Vision, Principles and Goals, except for mention of "aging population" in Goal 2. If we get into mentioning certain groups (i.e. competitive), cannot get into this without mentioning all of them. It's too specific to add competition in the goals. **Do not call out specific groups.**
- Advisory Group Member: Aquatic facilities already cater to aging population more than kids, youth. – Suggestion in **Goal 2: remove aging**
 - Advisory Group Member: disagrees – we are all "aging" – one day older than yesterday
 - Advisory Group Member: agree that many pools already cater to older patrons – in many pools the only offering for kids is lessons
 - Goal 2: Removing Aging discussion "Accommodate Vancouver's growing population."
 - **No consensus on removing the word aging in Goal 2**
- Advisory Group Member: Missing goal around **consistent standard or service level** – as there are some run-down facilities: maintain current service levels
- Suggestion to include "competition" in Principle 2: Expand the definition of aquatics to include beaches, wading pools, spray parks and new innovative aquatic experiences
 - Advisory Group Member: fine to include competition, if we have spray parks which is specifically leisure.

- Advisory Group Member: the place to put competition is in Principle 2
- Advisory Group Member: Adding competition isn't disclosing other people.
- **Facilitator: Adding word "competition" in Principle 2 – group consensus**

Evaluation, next steps and wrap-up

- Next meeting is on April 3 with a focus on recommendations