



**Van  
Play**  
Imagine  
parks+recreation

**VANCOUVER'S PARKS AND RECREATION:  
INVENTORY & ANALYSIS**

**REPORT 1-JULY 2018**



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Approved by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation – 23 July 2018*



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# ORIENTATION

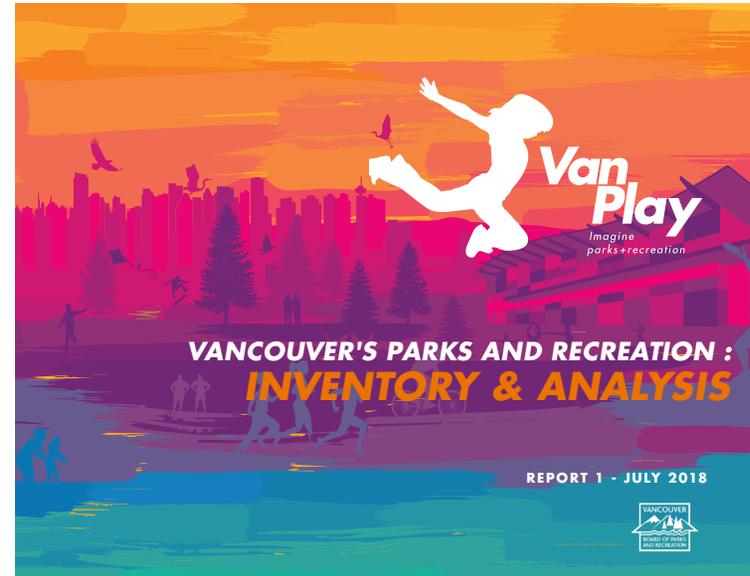
## HOW DO I USE THIS DOCUMENT?

Vancouver's stunning, world-class parks are the culmination of more than a century of committed effort by the Vancouver Park Board. From our world-renowned seawalls to our lush destination gardens to our network of vibrant neighbourhood parks, it's a legacy we're proud of.

What's next for parks and recreation in Vancouver? How do we respond to the challenges we are currently facing and thrive into the future? To answer these questions the Park Board set out to create a new "Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan." We've called the journey "VanPlay," the first city-wide review of parks and recreation services we've done since 1992.

In 2017, we commenced robust data collection and analysis, research on international best practices and consultation with the public, Park Board staff, partners, stakeholders and experts. The result of this work is presented in four parts:

- **Vancouver's Parks And Recreation: Inventory & Analysis** – a compendium to the current state of the City's parks and recreation system - *this document* (2018)
- **Vancouver's Parks And Recreation: 10 Goals to Shape the Next 25 Years** – a set of aspirational statements to set the course for parks and recreation into the future (2018)
- **Vancouver's Parks and Recreation: Strategic Bold Moves** – outlining bold strategies to deliver on the vision for the future over the next 25 years (2019)
- **Vancouver's Parks and Recreation: Playbook** – the plan for implementation and operationalization of these big moves (2019)



## VANCOUVER'S PARKS AND RECREATION: INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

This report provides an overview of the current state of Vancouver's parks and recreation system and an introduction to the Park Board's assets, programs and operations. Due to the breadth of work undertaken and the services, programs and experiences offered by the Park Board, it does not attempt to cover everything. This document focuses in on the work of the Park Board with the acknowledgement that there is a vast network of partners and organizations that make the system what it is. For example, it does not address community centre operations or programming, marinas and speciality attractions, like the Stanley Park Train.

This thorough inventory and analysis provides the groundwork for future goals, actions and recommendations that will be issued in subsequent reports.



## THE VANCOUVER BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

*The Vancouver Park Board is the only elected body of its kind in Canada. Formed in 1888 as a committee to manage the new Stanley Park, its history is as old as the city itself.*

It has exclusive possession, jurisdiction and control over 230+ public parks in Vancouver and a large public recreation system of community centres, pools, rinks, fitness centres, golf courses, street trees, marinas, playing fields and more.

The Vancouver Park Board's mission is to provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit all people, communities and the environment.

The elected nature of the Park Board and the strength and focus of its mandate have resulted in urban parks and recreation that today hold an enviable and esteemed position world-wide.

The City of Vancouver, including the Vancouver Park Board, is regulated under the *Vancouver Charter*, a provincial statute. The Charter contains the rules that govern how the City operates, what bylaws City Council can create and how budgets are set. The seven members of the Park Board (Commissioners) are nominated and elected at the same time and in the same manner as City Councillors.

The elected Park Board is supported by a dedicated team of over 1000 City of Vancouver staff who oversee everything from lifeguarding at our beaches, tending to colourful gardens, growing the lush urban forest and fostering vibrant events, to crafting welcoming parks, facilities and services and much, much more.

*LEFT: Stanley Park*

## VANCOUVER PARK BOARD STRATEGIC VISION:

*To be the leader in parks and recreation by connecting people to greenspace, active living and community.*



# VISION + OBJECTIVES

## VISION

*Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan will provide a road map to maximize access to high-quality parks and recreation experiences that connect people with each other and with nature.*

## OBJECTIVES

- To provide a 25-year outlook on the future of Vancouver's park and recreation system, capturing the threats and opportunities that shape or hinder its potential
- To develop an implementation strategy that will work within the City of Vancouver's 10-year Capital Strategic Outlook
- To explore citywide service-level delivery for parks and recreation with recognition of the urban core and growth areas
- To foster a comprehensive policy framework that optimizes opportunities for positive health, well-being and social inclusion through a connected, diverse and equitable parks and recreation system
- To guide the development and renewal of parks and the development, renewal and replacement of recreation facilities

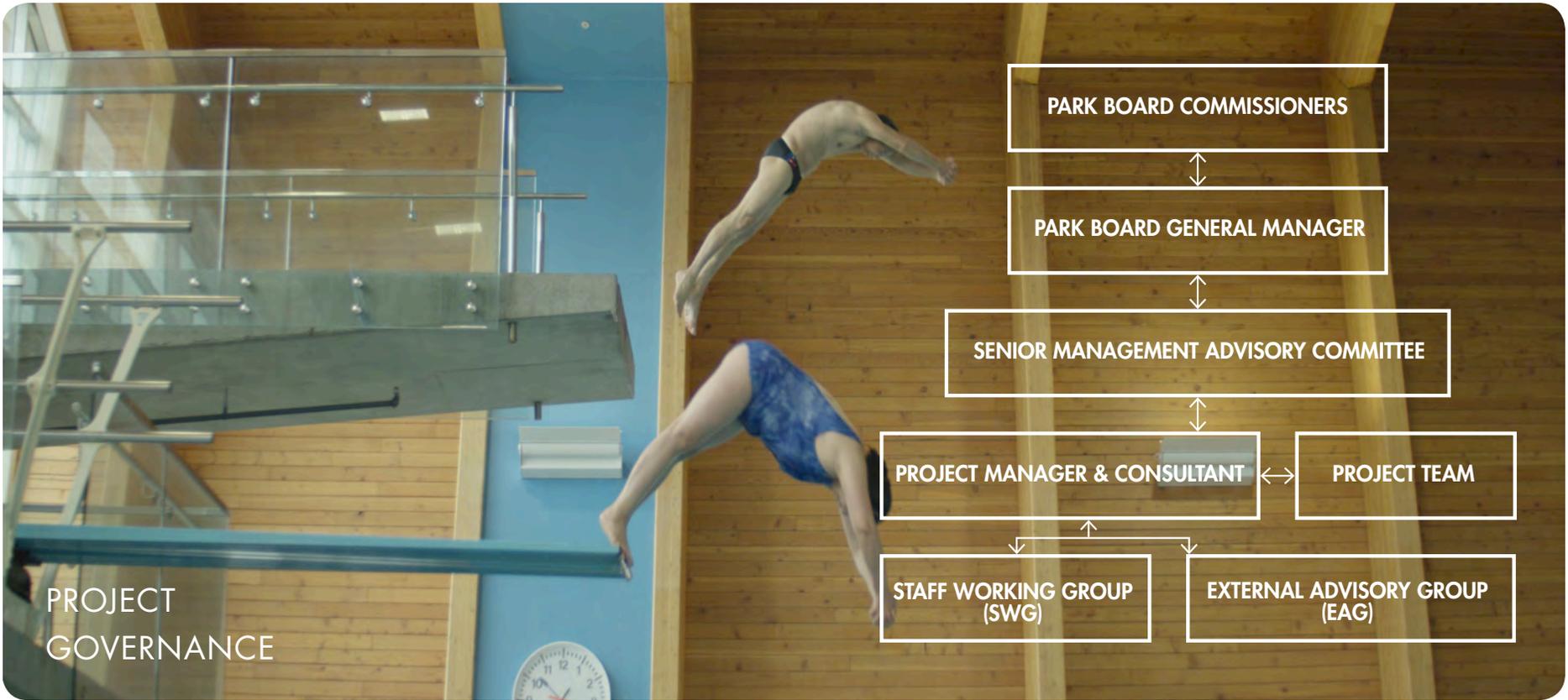


*Clockwise, from top:*

*VanDusen in Autumn | Park Board*

*Swimming Lessons | Park Board*

*Vancouver from the Air, 1939 | City of Vancouver Archives (CoV Archives)*



PROJECT  
GOVERNANCE

## PROJECT TEAM

A cross-departmental team of Park Board and City of Vancouver staff are overseeing the project, with Park Board Commissioners providing leadership and guidance throughout the process. Design Workshop, a global urban planning and landscape architecture firm, leads a consultant team of international experts and thought leaders including Vancouver-based firms, Modus Planning and Engagement and LEES+Associates. An External Advisory Group—composed of community stakeholders, key parks and recreation partners

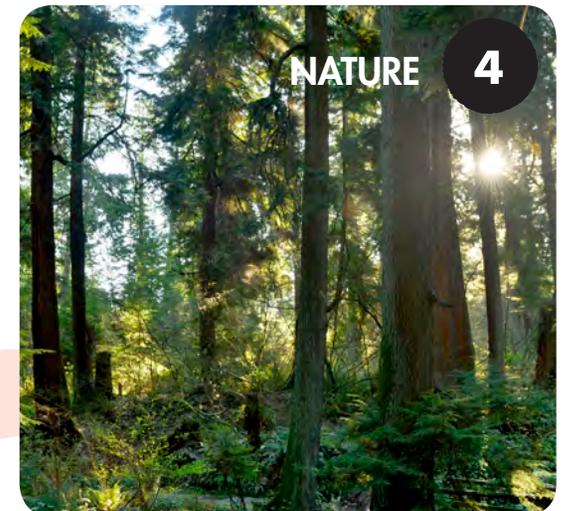
and service providers—provides local insights to the team. A broad range of community members have opportunities for input throughout the planning process, including residents, visitors, non-profit organizations, businesses, user groups and non-users, and the general public. The Park Board are developing a strong relationship with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations rights holders. This ongoing work has informed this report and will continue to shape the outcomes of the study.

## PLAN STRUCTURE

*This Inventory and Analysis takes a systematic look at key elements of the parks and recreation network and is organized into four chapters:*

- 1. Parks:** This chapter assesses Vancouver’s inventory of parks across five classifications. Information is provided on the range of park amenities and programming in parks including horticulture gardens and community gardens.
- 2. Recreation:** This chapter focuses on the activities that activate our parks and facilities, with a focus on outdoor sport, art and play amenities—including tennis courts, playing fields, playgrounds and dog off-leash areas.
- 3. Facilities:** This chapter focuses on the recreational, social and cultural services provided by built spaces, such as community centres, pools, ice rinks, field houses, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory.
- 4. Nature:** This chapter explores how to bolster natural areas of ecological importance, expand wildlife habitat and better connect residents with nature.

The master plan is supported by VanPlay—a two-year-long conversation with residents, staff, partners, stakeholders and experts. The project's Critical Success Factors, which have guided development of the plan, can be found in the Appendix 1.



*Clockwise, from top right:*

*Girl Running | VanPlay Video Photos*

*Cycle Sport | VanPlay Video Photos*

*Stanley Park | Katherine Howard*

*Man Swimming | VanPlay Video Photos*

*Facing: Divers | VanPlay Video Photos*

## PROCESS

*This master plan is a multi-year engagement and content development process divided into the following phases:*

**PHASE 1—SATISFACTION, BIG IDEAS AND PRIORITY SETTING**—Focused on engaging the community in a conversation about the future of parks and recreation; gathering big ideas and accessing key constraints; and setting priorities through public outreach, stakeholder engagement and technical analysis.

**PHASE 2—CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES**—Assessed key challenges and opportunities for each vision element through analysis and expert consultation; included a public lecture series—Smart City Talks—with subject matter experts; and convened a Community Dialogue and Community Centre Association Workshop to delve into issues facing service providers, partners and community members.

**PHASE 3—GOALS FOR THE FUTURE, ROLES + RESPONSIBILITIES**—Convened Park Board staff and stakeholders for goal setting, engaged community members in vital conversations, called Deep Dives, on subjects of interest; and partnered with the Society for Children and Youth to explore the parks from the perspective of elementary school students through the Urban Explorers project.

**PHASE 4—TESTING THE GOALS**—Leveraged over a year of consultation with the public, partners, staff and stakeholders to shape 10 goal statements to inspire the future of Vancouver's parks and recreation; see Report 2.

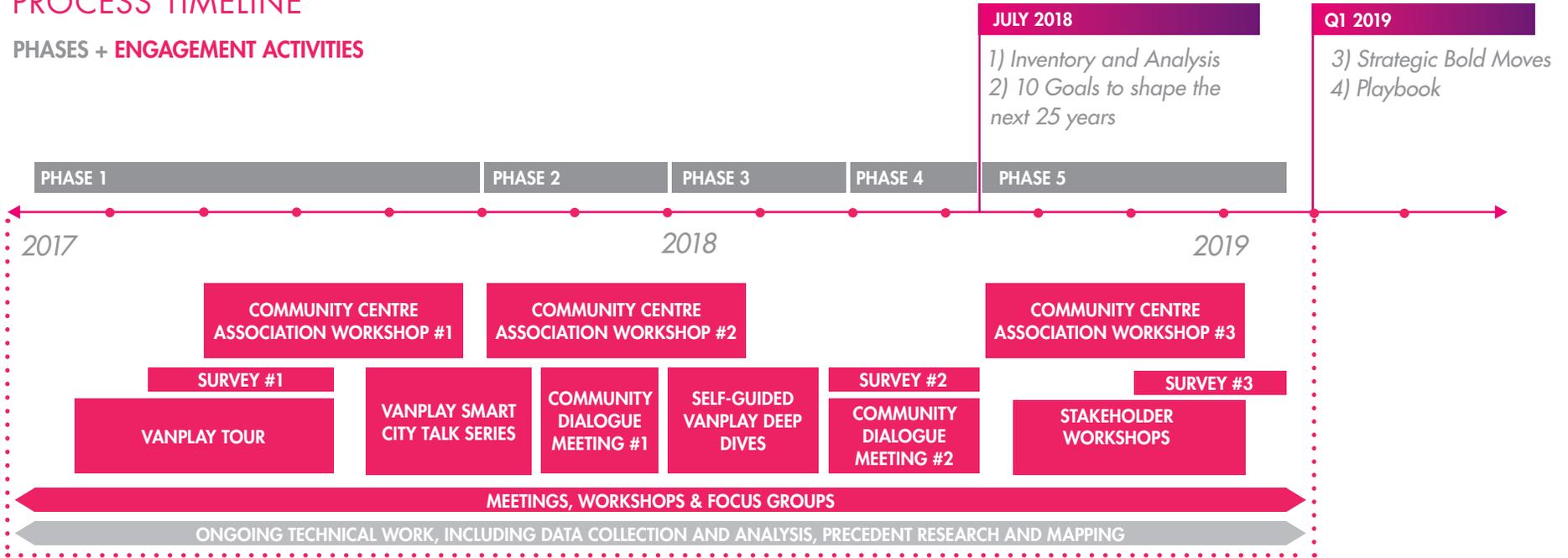
**PHASE 5—LEVEL OF SERVICE, BIG MOVES + OPERATIONALISATION OF BIG IDEAS**—To come in late 2018 and early 2019, phase 5 will include a series of workshops and an online survey to define metrics for success, write targets for park and recreation amenity provision and the implementation plan.



*VanPlay will develop a new roadmap for maximizing access to high-quality parks.*

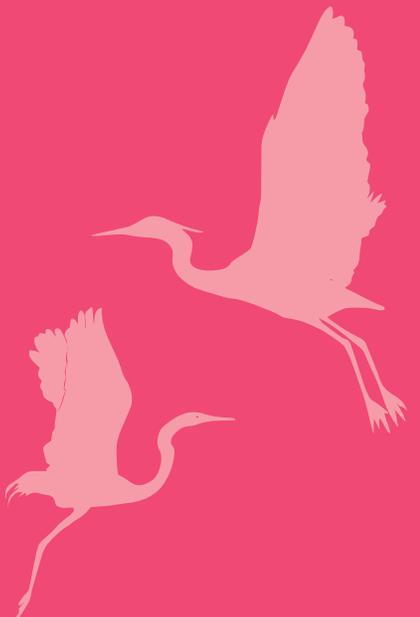
# PROCESS TIMELINE

## PHASES + ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



VanPlay Tour Photos left to right (all by Katherine Howard): Youth Participation, Challenges and Opportunities Outreach Board, Public Comments





# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## **BACKGROUND**

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Vancouver Today  
Planning Context  
System Vulnerabilities  
Growth Areas  
Identifying the Underserved

## **FRAMEWORK FOR EQUITY + WELCOME**

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Core Values  
Lenses for Assessing Equity + Welcome

## **ANALYSIS OVERVIEW**

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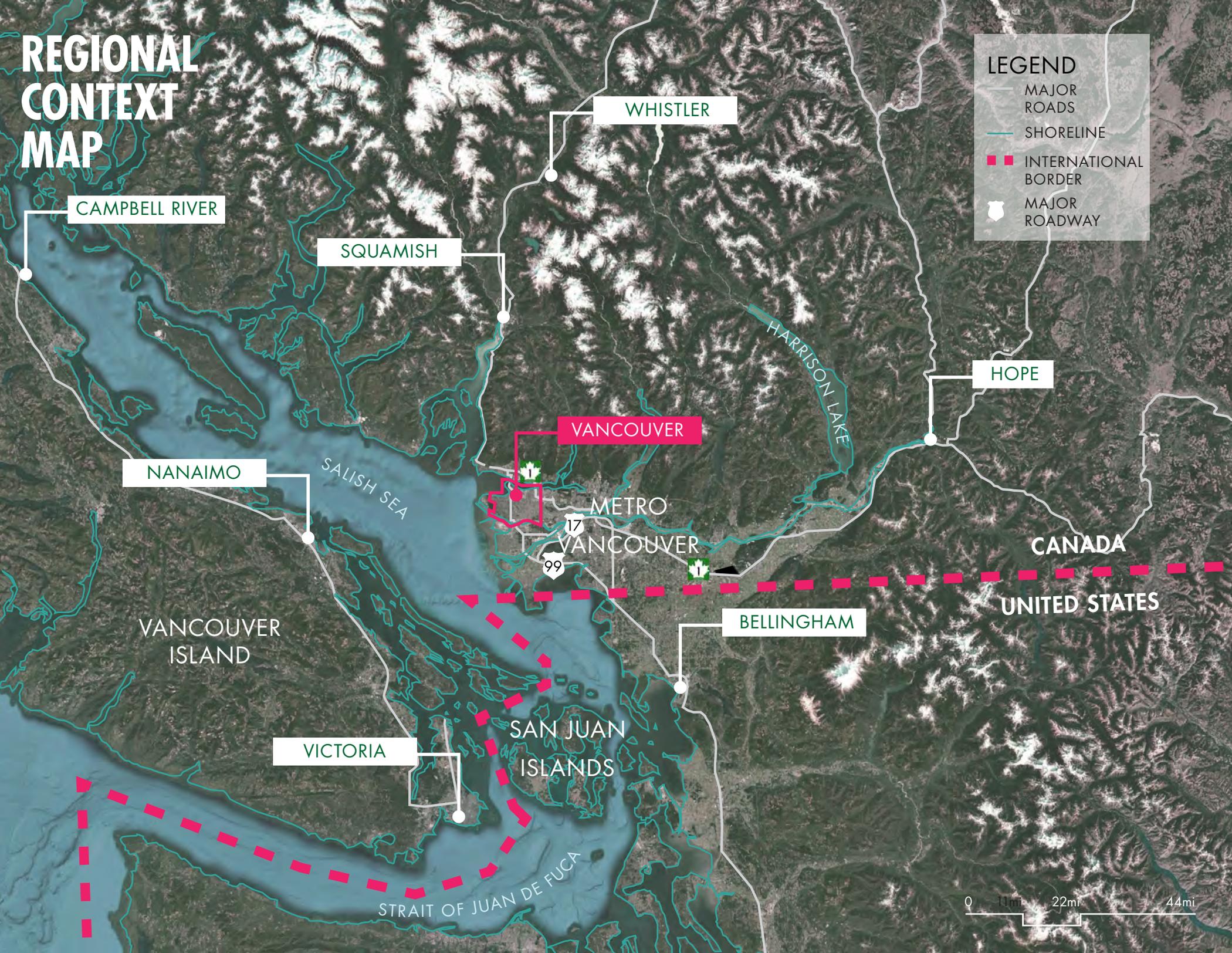
Methods

## **ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW**

**22**

*English Bay at dusk,  
photo by Colin Knowles.*

# REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP



# BACKGROUND

*The area we now call Vancouver supported a temperate rainforest full of towering Western red cedar, Douglas fir and hemlock trees.*

Indigenous peoples have been living on these lands since time immemorial. Vancouver is within the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, who still live here today.

In 1886, an early industrial settlement, Granville, was renamed Vancouver and incorporated as a city. The townsite included the earlier industrial settlement of Gastown.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, the City designated Stanley Park—an area originally home to villages of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations people. In 1890, Vancouver City Council set up an autonomous and separately-elected park board, the only one of its kind in Canada<sup>2</sup>. Known now as the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (or Park Board), it remains committed to its mission of connecting people to green space, active living and community.

Since the early days, Vancouver has transformed from a trading post into a world-class city on the Pacific rim. As Vancouver continues to densify, the city's park and public space network becomes all the more precious and vulnerable. Since the last parks master plan in 1992, the city has gained

over 150,000 new residents, while its open space and park network has increased moderately<sup>3</sup>.

Today, The Park Board manages 228 public parks, from destination gardens to urban plazas. The Park Board also co-operates 24 community centres alongside the Community Centre Associations. The Board manages a robust network of recreation facilities, including swimming pools, arenas, playing fields and three golf courses. The Park Board serves the social and recreational needs of community members and acts as an important cultural steward through coordination of event venues, public art, arts and culture programming and cultural landmarks.

## VANCOUVER TODAY

Vancouver consistently ranks as one of the most livable cities in the world with aspirations to become the greenest city by 2020. Today, Vancouver is home to more than 630,000 residents who shared their city with over 10.3 million overnight visitors in 2017, the fourth consecutive record year for tourism in Vancouver. The economic impact of tourism was estimated at \$4.8 billion in direct visitor spending in 2017. Vancouver is located in the greater Vancouver Metro area, covering 4% of the land area with 24% of the regional population.<sup>4</sup>

Vancouver is surrounded by coastal landscapes and diverse recreation opportunities, including canoeing with indigenous tour leaders and sunset gazing at a waterfront beach. Vancouver's parks and recreation system hosts a range of activities that draw residents and visitors to the area's cultural, recreational and sporting destinations. These activities are the life of the city, inspiring people to connect to health, sports, entertainment and artistic endeavors.

*1890:  
Vancouver  
City Council  
establishes the  
independently  
elected Park  
Board just four  
years after the  
incorporation of  
Vancouver.*

<sup>1</sup> Morley, A. Vancouver: From Milltown to Metropolis. Vancouver: Mitchell Press. 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Steele. The First 100 Years. Vancouver, BC, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Vancouver Park Board. Park Provision Standard Study. Vancouver, BC, 2016 / 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Tourism Vancouver. Statistics, 2017.

# BACKGROUND

## PLANNING CONTEXT

*In the 20th Century, Vancouver undertook a series of planning initiatives that shaped the parks and recreation network.*

Most notably, the Harland Bartholomew and Associates' 1928 Plan for the City of Vancouver introduced neighbourhood parks every square mile, as well as greenways, pleasure drives and protected play areas. Follow-up plans in the 1940s, 1960s and 1980s cemented these goals and added active recreation amenities to parks and school grounds. Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Master Plan represents the first comprehensive parks and recreation planning project for Vancouver since 1992.

The master plan sits at the centre of a interrelated network of planning initiatives, occurring at a regional and local scale. The diagram on page 7 explores the master plan's relationship to concurrent social and cultural planning efforts as well as the relative timeline of each.

In 2018, the Park Board Commissioners adopted a statement of mission, vision and values for reconciliation with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. In 2016, the Park Board was the first municipal government body in Canada to endorse 11 ambitious strategies in its programs and facilities to advance the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to recognise the rights of First Nations in unceded territory. The Park Board also endorses the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Influential Vancouver plans include:

### Vancouver Park Board

- Arts Policy–2003
- Sport for Life: Vancouver Sport Strategy–2008
- Culture Plan–2008
- Adaptation Strategy–2012
- Urban Forest Strategy–2014
- Rewilding Vancouver–2014
- Bird Strategy–2015
- Biodiversity Strategy–2016

### City of Vancouver

- High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines–1992
- Housing and Homelessness Strategy–2011
- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan–2011
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy–2011
- Healthy City Strategy–2014
- Renewable City Strategy–2016
- Local Area Plans (various)–ongoing
- Cultural Infrastructure Plan–ongoing
- Creative City Strategy–ongoing



*Left to Right:*

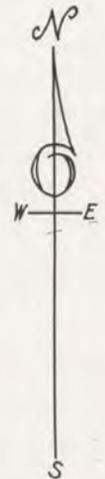
Classifications of Populations, Plan for the City of Vancouver, 1928 | Park Board

Playgrounds Map, Plan for the City of Vancouver, 1928 | Park Board

# G R E A T E R V A N C O U V E R B R I T I S H C O L U M B I A

VANCOUVER  
TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION  
1 9 2 8

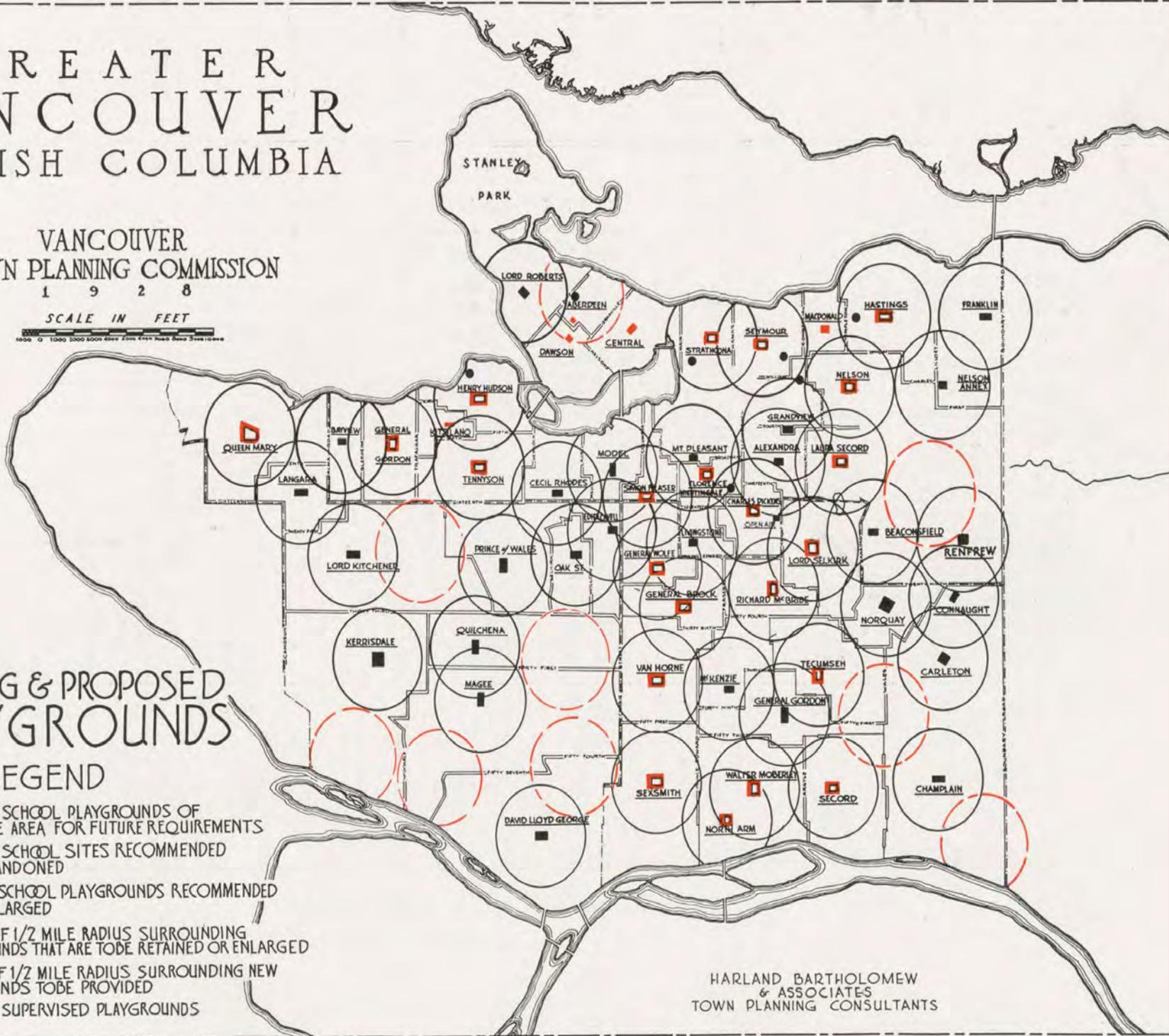
SCALE IN FEET  
0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000



## EXISTING & PROPOSED PLAYGROUNDS

### LEGEND

- EXISTING SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS OF ADEQUATE AREA FOR FUTURE REQUIREMENTS
- EXISTING SCHOOL SITES RECOMMENDED TO BE ABANDONED
- EXISTING SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS RECOMMENDED TO BE ENLARGED
- CIRCLE OF 1/2 MILE RADIUS SURROUNDING PLAYGROUNDS THAT ARE TO BE RETAINED OR ENLARGED
- CIRCLE OF 1/2 MILE RADIUS SURROUNDING NEW PLAYGROUNDS TO BE PROVIDED
- EXISTING SUPERVISED PLAYGROUNDS



HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW  
& ASSOCIATES  
TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANTS

# CONCURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS (AS OF EARLY 2018)

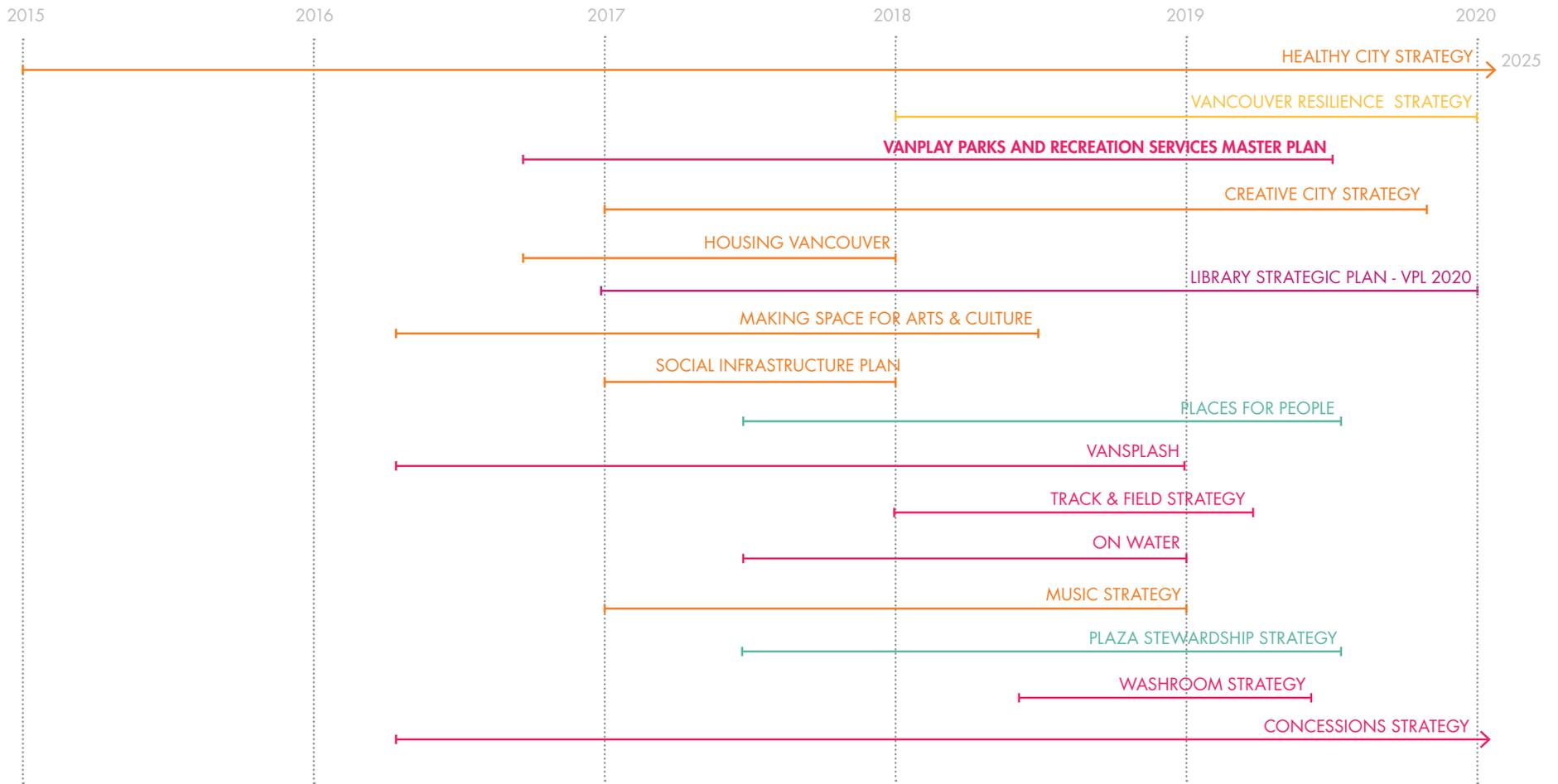
SOCIAL, CULTURAL, PUBLIC REALM STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS DIAGRAM



## LEGEND

- Resilient Vancouver
- Vancouver Park Board
- Vancouver Public Library
- Arts, Culture & Community Services
- Engineering: Public Space & Street Use and Planning & Development Services

# SOCIAL, CULTURAL, PUBLIC REALM STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS TIMELINE

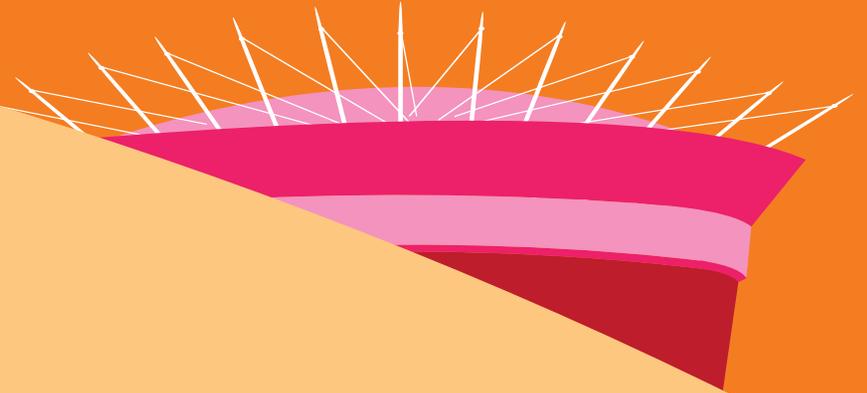




YVR IS THE  
**#1**  
NORTH AMERICAN  
AIRPORT, SKYTRAX

**2010**  
WINTER OLYMPICS  
HOST CITY

THE 2010 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES WERE AN INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS STORY OF SPORTS HOSTING AND SPURRED INVALUABLE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS.



VANCOUVER RANKS HIGHER THAN ANY OTHER NORTH AMERICAN CITY ON WALKSCORE.COM

WHICH IS JUST ONE REASON IT WAS VOTED THE

**93**  
WALKSCORE

**85**  
TRANSIT SCORE

**91**  
BIKE SCORE

**#3**  
MOST LIVABLE CITY IN THE WORLD, ECONOMIST 2016



STANLEY PARK IS A WHOPPING  
**405**  
HECTARES

**#1**  
PARK IN THE WORLD, 2014 TRIP ADVISOR



TOP  
**10**  
BEST BEACH CITIES IN THE WORLD, NATL GEO



# BACKGROUND

## SYSTEM VULNERABILITIES

Across Vancouver, neighbourhoods continue to densify and diversify. With the rising cost of living, there is a decline in young families living in and moving to Vancouver. The City is facing increasing pressures to deliver additional affordable housing and childcare. With the average home price over \$1,000,000, homeownership is becoming out-of-reach for many. Over the next 25 years, the population over 65 is estimated to nearly double.<sup>1</sup> The demographic shift will impact everything from how parks and recreation services are provided to trends in desired amenities.

The parks and recreation system is increasingly under pressure from competing interests for land use and funding. The City of Vancouver collects Development Cost Levies from new development in order to fund new facilities and infrastructure made necessary by growth. In 2018, the proportion of these funds allocated to parks was reduced from 41% to 18%.<sup>2</sup> While collaboration with private and public interests offers mutually beneficial opportunities for unconventional public spaces (such as parklets), parks are often seen as "open" spaces that can accommodate future infrastructure for growth, such as underground power stations. Beyond securing adequate funding, growth of parks and community centres is further constrained by land availability.

Post-World War II, the parks and recreation system saw a major boom in park acquisitions and the building of community centres in all 22 Vancouver neighbourhoods.

<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver. A Portrait of Social Infrastructure in Vancouver. Vancouver, BC, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Vancouver City Council Report. "Vancouver City-wide Development Cost Levy Update (2017-2026)", July 26, 2017.

However, this was the last major infrastructure boost to the parks and recreation system. More than 40 years on, the majority of facilities and amenities are now in need of renewal.

These dilemmas place increased stress on the parks and recreation system to provide adequate parks and public space for an increasingly large and diverse population. With density predicted to increase at a steady pace, stewardship and the strategic expansion of these spaces will become essential to the sustained health of the City moving forward.

*As the city increases in desirability, threats—from climate change to affordability—emerge that challenge the economic, social and environmental health of the parks and recreation system.*



## ECONOMIC THREATS:

**1) DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES** (e.g. higher land costs, affordability, limited acquisition opportunities, competing interests for public land and development fees, pressures from non-park uses, utility conflicts)

**2) INCREASING DENSITY** (e.g. growing populations, less parkland per capita, changing community needs, changing park typologies, increased usership)

## SOCIAL THREATS:

**1) RISING INEQUITY** (e.g. income inequity, housing unaffordability, uneven quality, increased need for social services, unwelcoming facilities, uneven funding)

**2) SOCIAL ISOLATION** (e.g. a topical concern as populations continue to age and shift into new and different lifestyles; difficult to engage newcomers, minorities and immigrants that are often underserved and unsure how to access opportunities)

## ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS:

**1) ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE** (e.g. sea level rise; hotter, longer summers; more severe storms, seismic risk, lower snowpack, increased operations and maintenance costs, tree mortality, declining ecological health)

**2) HUMAN IMPACTS** (e.g. pollution causing air and water quality deterioration, overuse of park space causing degradation of landscapes, introduction of invasive species)



Development Pressures + Changing Community Needs | Vancouver Courier. August 10, 2017



Competing Interests + Human Impacts of Overuse | Global News, April 21, 2017



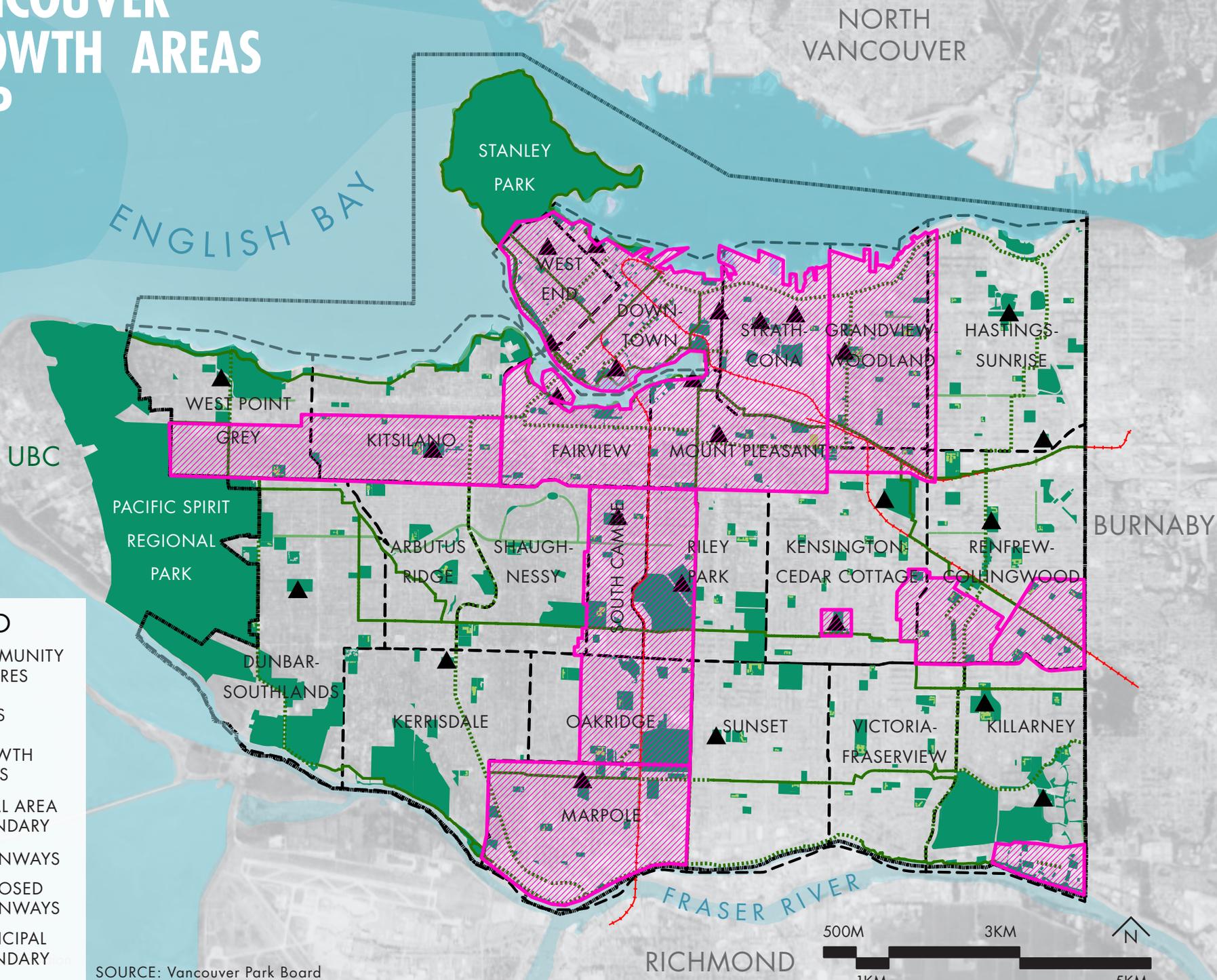
Secondary Threats of Environmental Change | CBC News, March 11, 2016

# VANCOUVER GROWTH AREAS MAP

**LEGEND**

- ▲ COMMUNITY CENTRES
- PARKS
- ▨ GROWTH AREAS
- - - LOCAL AREA BOUNDARY
- GREENWAYS
- - - PROPOSED GREENWAYS
- ||||| MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY

SOURCE: Vancouver Park Board



# BACKGROUND

## GROWTH AREAS 2017-2041

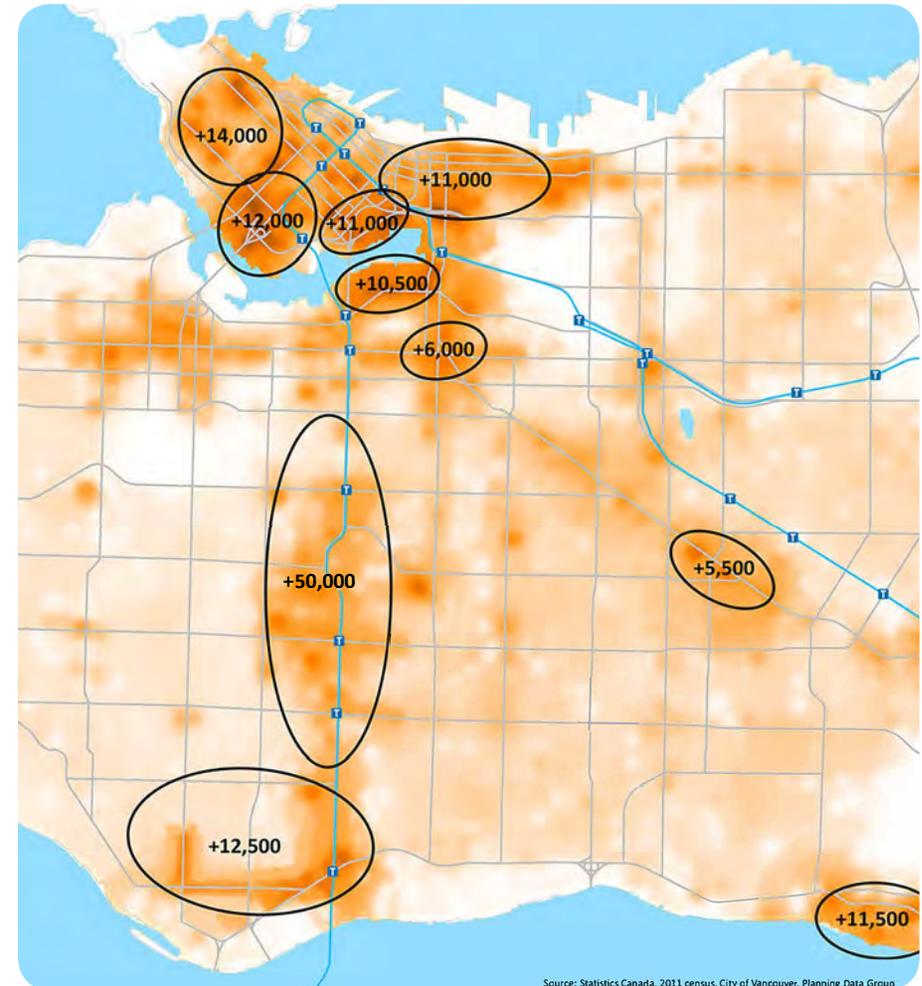
*With the population projected to gain more than 400 new residents each month, some areas of Vancouver are changing<sup>1</sup>. New density brings new life and increasing needs for park space and amenities to ensure the change is positive for neighbourhoods.*

Given the uneven nature of development—some areas are rapidly densifying, while others remain much the same, the Park Board must anticipate change before it happens in order to maintain the level of quality and service in each neighbourhood. In densifying areas, maintenance demands will be more acute with existing parks serving growing numbers of residents.

The growth areas selected for this study align with the City's 2041 population density projections (figure at right is an approximate projection as of 2016) as well as key transit corridors that are undergoing major transformation. The corridors included in the study are Cambie, Broadway and Hastings Sunrise.

Growth Areas identified for study through VanPlay:

- Downtown Urban Core
- Cambie Corridor
- Broadway Corridor
- Hastings-Sunrise Corridor
- Mount Pleasant
- Norquay
- Marpole
- River District



### 2041 POPULATION DENSITY PROJECTIONS (APPROXIMATE PROJECTION AS OF 2016)

**LEGEND**  
Population Density  
(Person per Hectare)



<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver. A Portrait of Social Infrastructure in Vancouver. Vancouver, BC, 2016.

# VANCOUVER 2016 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

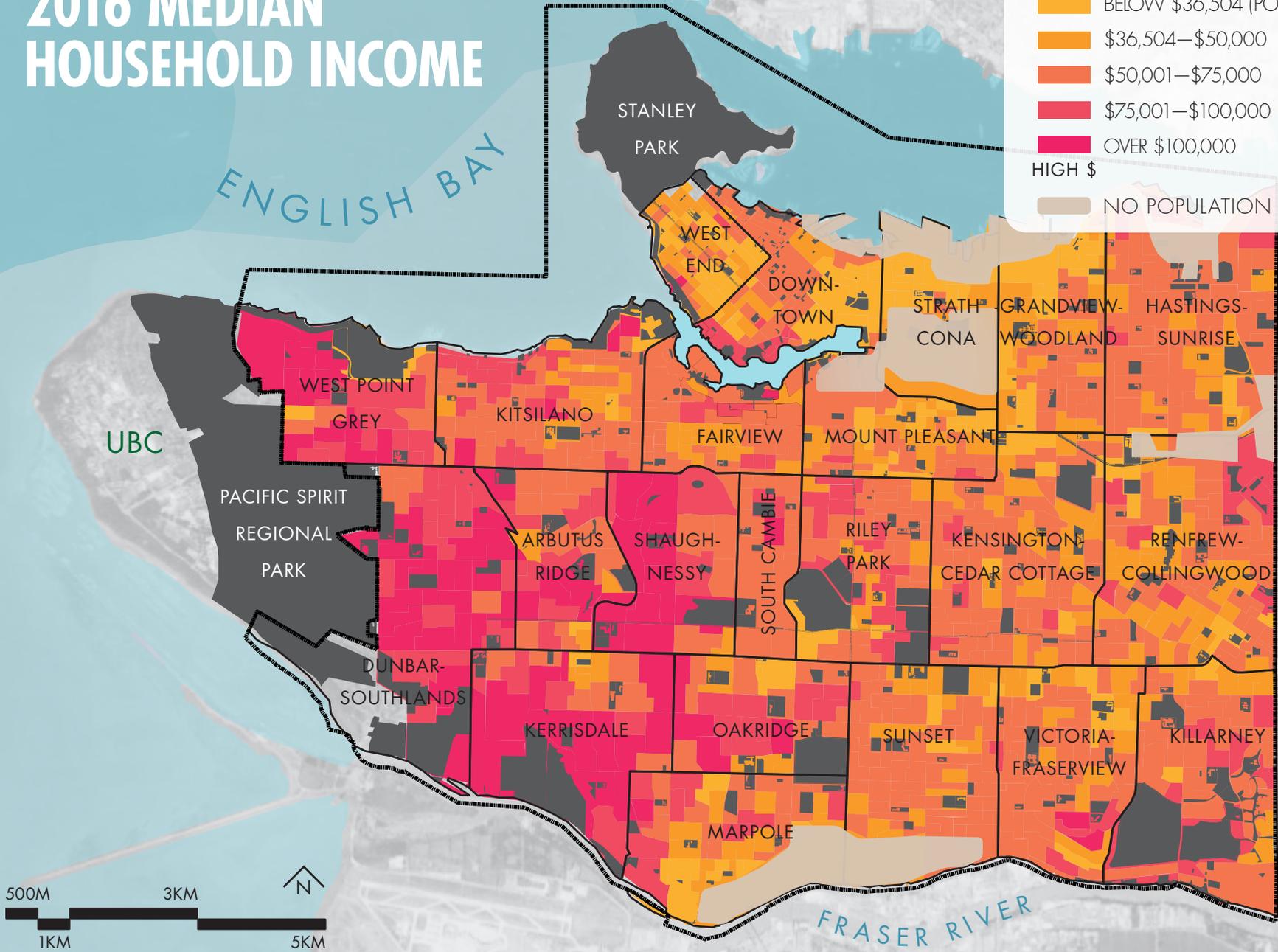
**LEGEND**

LOW \$

- BELOW \$36,504 (POVERTY LINE)
- \$36,504—\$50,000
- \$50,001—\$75,000
- \$75,001—\$100,000
- OVER \$100,000

HIGH \$

- NO POPULATION DATA



SOURCE: 2016 Census

# BACKGROUND

## IDENTIFYING THE UNDERSERVED

*By analyzing both spatial and demographic data in Vancouver, we aim to develop a nuanced understanding of equity.*

Economic, social and environmental conditions have resulted in an uneven distribution of opportunities.

There are 16 underserved neighbourhoods as defined by hectares of neighbourhood parkland per 1,000 people metric (2015 + 2041). Below is a summary of what contributes to underserved areas in Vancouver:

- Parks and facilities projected to be impacted by climate change and sea level rise
- Parks and facilities in growth areas
- Parks, facilities and other public assets that are under pressure by development and redevelopment
- Parks and facilities that are isolated and not connected to other community assets, such as bikeways, schools and community centres

In addition to mapping spatial data, the VanPlay team is engaging in demographic research to better understand social and economic patterns across the city.

The goal in identifying populations likely to be underserved is not to connote deficit or imply victimhood

in these populations, but rather to recognize where the parks and recreation system is not meeting needs. This awareness allows us to ask better questions, to ensure these voices are heard, their needs acknowledged and additional resources are provided. In Vancouver, populations likely to be underserved can include:

- Visible minorities
- LGBTQ2S+ community
- Low-income individuals
- First Nations and Urban Indigenous People
- Persons over 65
- Persons with disabilities
- Females
- Persons with children
- Newcomers
- Renters

Mapping and understanding these demographic patterns is a complex, sensitive and constantly shifting task. To synthesize this effort, the planning team has identified two indicator categories for focus: areas of low income and population density. These two indicators were used as a proxy for a comprehensive needs assessment and allow for identification of patterns as a baseline for further work.

## *equitable access*

Recognition of the inherent privileges some populations have to access and enjoy parks and recreation and provide added support and welcome to those populations without this privilege.

**Vancouver's 65+ population is set to double in the next 25 years. Families and seniors typically need a 5-minute walk distance to regularly access parks.**

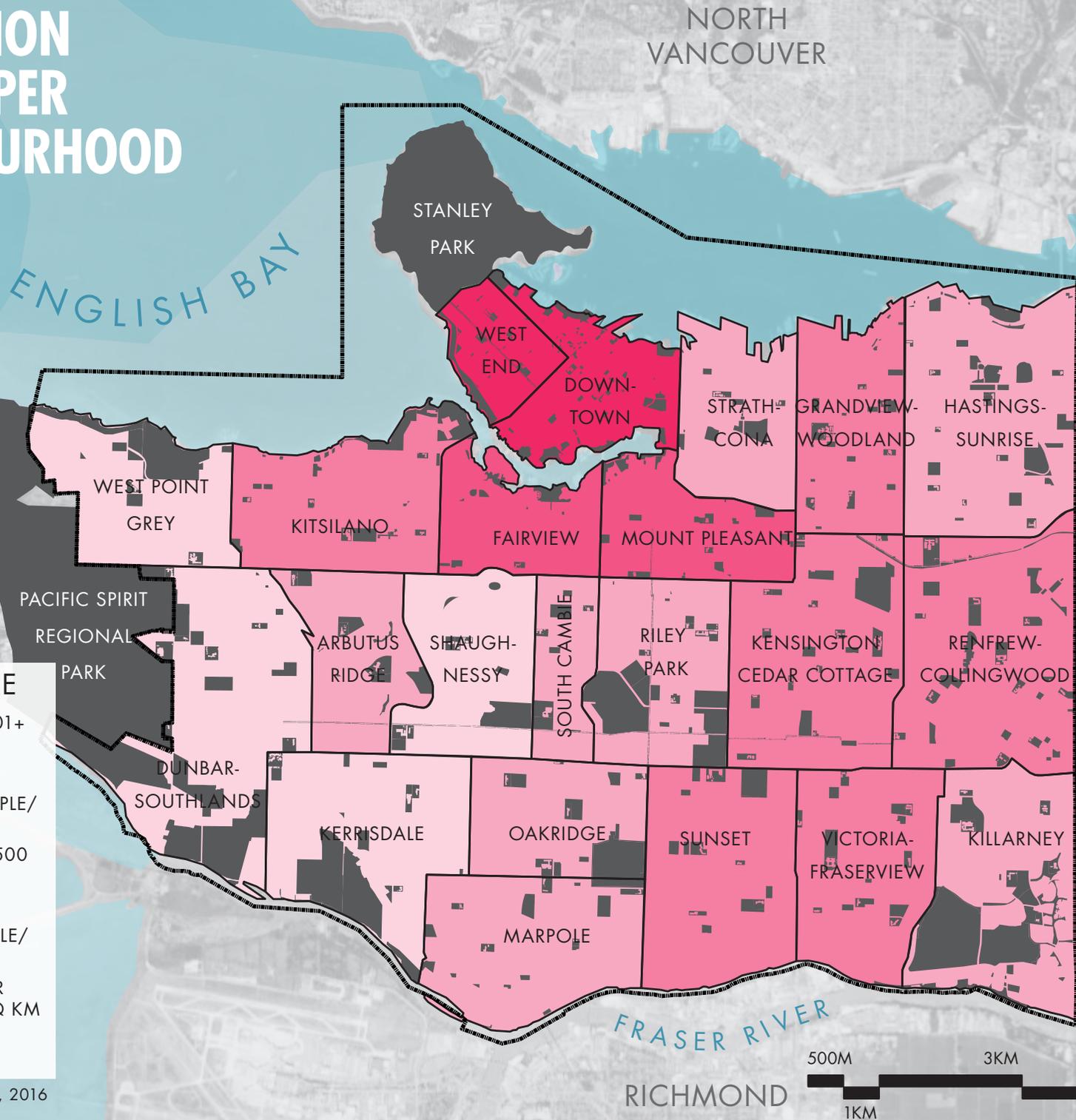
SOURCE: City of Vancouver. A Portrait of Social Infrastructure in Vancouver. Vancouver, BC, 2016.

# POPULATION DENSITY PER NEIGHBOURHOOD (2016)

## DENSITY SCORE

- 1.5 HIGH | 10001+ PEOPLE/SQ KM
- 1.25 MED/HIGH | 7501-10000 PEOPLE/SQ KM
- 1 MED | 5001-7500 PEOPLE/SQ KM
- .75 LOW/MED | 2501-5000 PEOPLE/SQ KM
- .5 LOW | UNDER 2500 PEOPLE/SQ KM
- MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY

SOURCE: Census Data, 2016





# FRAMEWORK FOR EQUITY + WELCOME

## CORE VALUES

Park Board staff, internal stakeholder groups, recent studies like the *Park Provision* report and the public recognize that providing welcoming parks equitably across the city is a core value. **The parks and recreation system provides life-sustaining services, including preservation of the city's remaining natural areas, health benefits from play, and connection to nature and community for mental health benefits.**

What does welcoming parks and equitable access to parks mean? The Environmental Justice Framework for Parks states that “all people and communities, regardless of their sociodemographic background **are entitled to equal distribution of environmental amenities and no group shall be disproportionately affected by environmental hazards** [e.g., pollution, impacts of climate change].”<sup>1</sup> Adding to this discussion, Edward W. Soja writes: “[Spatial justice] involves the fair and **equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them.**”<sup>2</sup> Understanding the spatial distribution of privilege, choice, environmental hazards and socially valued resources is key to providing parks equitably.

1 Wen, Ming. Spatial Disparities in the Distribution of Parks and Green Spaces in the United States. Active Living Research Conference, 2012.

2 Soja, Edward W. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

## LENSES FOR ASSESSING EQUITY + WELCOME

Here is where we are heading; the ultimate outcome is to evaluate Vancouver's parks and recreation across three criteria—access, quality and inclusivity. To do so, the VanPlay team has organized a set of the industry's best level of service standards and environmental justice tools into a framework for equity and welcome. These criteria will be evaluated over time as new priorities emerge.

### Access

The analysis evaluated current access standards, how Vancouver parks and recreation facilities are connected to walking networks, bikeways and greenways; and how parks and recreation are currently being accessed and used [public surveys and the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC)].

### Quality

Tools for this evaluation include park classifications and understanding the distribution of the range of park amenities, recreation programs, experiences, investment and maintenance across the park system.

### Inclusivity

This set of tools identifies pressing social, environmental and ecological challenges that make the park system vulnerable. By examining pathways towards inclusivity, the strategies will bolster the Park Board's ability to provide welcoming parks and recreation experiences over the next 25+ years.

LOOK OUT  
FOR SECTIONS ON  
ACCESS, QUALITY AND  
INCLUSIVITY IN EACH  
CHAPTER.

VanPlay Video Photos



## ACCESS

### FRAMING QUESTIONS

- Who has access within a five-minute walk?
- What kinds of parks and recreation facilities do we have? Do we have enough?
- How are parks and recreation used?
- How do we get to parks and recreation?

### EVALUATION TOOLS

- Trends in per capita level of service
- *2016 Park Provision* access maps
- Connectivity (e.g. bikeways, greenways, transit, etc.)
- Survey and SOPARC findings on current use

Park Board



## QUALITY

### FRAMING QUESTIONS

- What is the historical capital investment?
- Are parks and facilities maintained consistently across the system? Does maintenance reflect the level of use?
- What is the range of experiences in parks and facilities? Do they meet their neighbourhood's needs?

### EVALUATION TOOLS

- Park classifications
- Capital investment and maintenance distribution of resources
- Range of park amenities and experiences
- Survey satisfaction levels

VanPlay Video Photos



## INCLUSIVITY

### FRAMING QUESTIONS

- How will parks and recreation adapt and plan for new development?
- What are the future impacts of climate change on parks and recreation and do they impact the system evenly?
- What services offer pathways for inclusion and welcome diverse cultures, abilities and needs?

### EVALUATION TOOLS

- Growth area and vulnerable populations
- First and secondary climate change threats
- Development pressures' impact
- Operations and maintenance impacts of social and environmental vulnerabilities

# ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

## METHODS

*The planning team is using an array of analysis tools to assess service and access. Below key methodologies are defined.*

### **Park Provision Study**

Vancouver first prioritized access to parks in the Harland Bartholomew and Associates' 1928 Plan for the City of Vancouver that introduced neighbourhood parks every square mile. The 1982 Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Master Plan expanded the City's parks and recreation network and formalized many of the social services provided in facilities. An innovative Management Plan in 1992 set a clear standard by introducing the goal of providing 1.1 hectares of green space per 1000 residents.

In the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, the City of Vancouver – in partnership with the Vancouver Park Board – set the goal of providing a green space within a five-minute walk of all residents. This study of the City's park and open space network measured park access with a 400m walk radius. This "as a crow flies" methodology put 92% of the City within the five-

minute walk range but did not account for how people actually walk to parks.

In 2016, the Park Board commissioned a Parks Provision Study to analyze park access through the sidewalk network to get a better understanding of how far residents actually live from parks. The study accounted for time delays at busy intersections and physical barriers to access, such as rail lines or steep hills. This study found that 73% of residents were within the five-minute walk range (and 99% were within a ten-minute range).

Using this new methodology we can analyse the impact of improvements to access, more clearly identify where new parks are required to fill access gaps and conversely can measure the population catchment of parks (how many people live within a 5-minute walk and what is the daytime population within that same distance) to see how hard parks are working.

For the full report, which outlines methodology and findings, see Appendix 2.

### **System for Observing Play & Recreation in Communities (SOPARC)**

System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) is a reliable and feasible observational survey tool for assessing physical

activity and how neighbourhood parks influence physical activity.

In late spring and early summer between May 28, 2017 and June 24, 2017, Urban Design 4 Health (UD4H) conducted a SOPARC study, collecting data on park usage and user behaviour from 24 parks (see map at right) in the City of Vancouver.

The survey instrument assesses who is accessing the park and provides demographic information, as well as physical activity levels by the park users. Out of the 228 parks, 24 were selected based on criteria including: presence of spaces for physical activity, parks located within City-defined growth areas, parks located in areas with a range of incomes, and park locations near a greenway.

Observational data gathering allows us to establish a good snapshot of how parks across the city are currently being used in an efficient manner. All observational data collection has pitfalls; it does not unearth the "why", but merely the "what" in a very broad sense. The data enables us to dig deeper, ask better questions and address the barriers to access that could be the cause of the patterns we observed.

For the full report, which outlines methodology and findings, see Appendix 3.

# SOPARC SURVEY LOCATIONS\*

\*LABELED PARKS INDICATE THE 24 PARKS SELECTED FOR OBSERVATION.

ENGLISH BAY

NORTH VANCOUVER

UBC

BURNABY

RICHMOND

MORTON PARK

NELSON PARK

EMERY BARNES PARK

ADANAC PARK

CONNAUGHT PARK

KASLO PARK

VALDEZ PARK

DAVID LAM PARK

GRIMMETT PARK

MT PLEASANT PARK

HILLCREST PARK

JOHN HENDRY PARK

GRANVILLE PARK

EARLES PARK

FOSTER PARK

MEMORIAL SOUTH PARK

QUILCHENA PARK

WINONA PARK

BOBOLINK PARK

MCCLEERY PARK

EAST FRASERLANDS NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

EBURNE PARK

## LEGEND

-  PARKS
-  COMMUNITY CENTRES
-  GREENWAYS
-  SKY TRAIN
-  LOCAL AREA BOUNDARIES
-  MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY



# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

*Commencing in June 2017, VanPlay has engaged over 30,000 residents and stakeholders in imagining the future of parks and recreation.*

The engagement strategy intends to inspire the entire community to get involved in shaping the plans and to be proud of the result. High visibility events raise awareness and provide a spectrum of opportunities for participation, alongside more intimate spaces to allow for deeper conversation and room to problem solve.

Full Community Engagement Summary Reports can be found in the Appendix 7.

## Phase 1 – Satisfaction, Big Ideas and Priority Setting

### *VanPlay Tour and Survey*

During the first phase of the project we set out to:

- Encourage vibrant, exciting conversation about the future of parks and recreation.
- Gather big ideas, barriers to access and trends in informal conversations with the community by making connections and creating an experience.
- Encourage people to complete the online survey, which asked questions about current satisfaction levels, priorities, barriers to access and trends.

In June 2017, the VanPlay team visited 11 events, geographically spread throughout the city with a pop-up “Imagination Playground” and a series of interactive display

boards. An estimated 4000+ interactions with the community during these events resulted in over 2700 responses to the online survey.

### *Issue Papers*

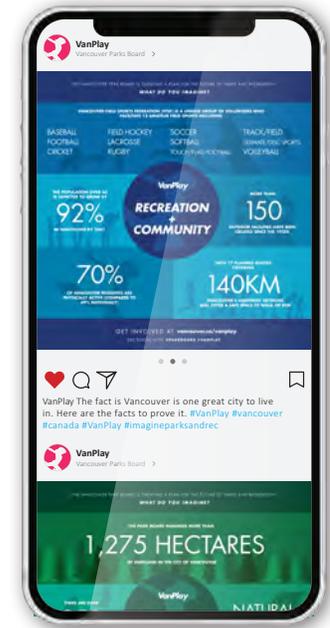
To inform and stimulate discussion among the public on key topics and trends, seven issue papers were developed on six themes; Innovation + Vision, Places + Access, Resilience + Wellbeing, Celebration + Tourism, Recreation + Community and Ecology + Nature. These papers helped shape the conversation and assisted in the public’s understanding of the scope of a master plan.

### *VanPlay Video*

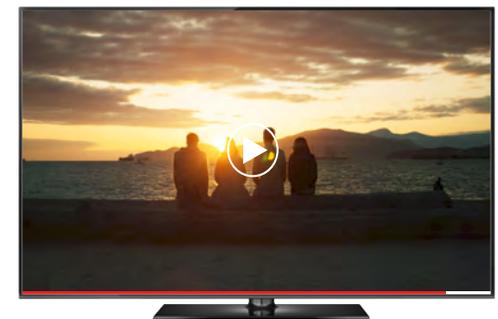
To support uptake of community engagement, we created an atmospheric promotional video to build excitement and call-to-action on parks and recreation in Vancouver.

It is an emotional, experiential rather than an instructional resource, puts the viewer in the elements, in our landscape, in our facilities and urges participation—“We want you to help us frame an ambitious vision for these assets, a vision that will guide us into the next century.”

The video appeals to the viewer’s senses and emotions – pride, identity, sense of ownership, excitement, being a part of the community. It focuses on ‘what moves us’ both physically and mentally.



Digital Campaign



VanPlay Video

### Previous Engagement Review

This planning effort is building on a substantial amount of previous strategic planning work undertaken by the Park Board. Key findings from 19 previous engagement efforts were reviewed, involving more than 34,000 people, including VanSplash, Smithe and Richards Park development, Sunset Park Master Plan, New Brighton Park Shoreline Habitat Restoration Project, Cambie Corridor Phase 3, Grandview Woodland Community Plan and many more. The summaries were studied and the findings added to the research for VanPlay. The full report can be found in the Appendix 6.

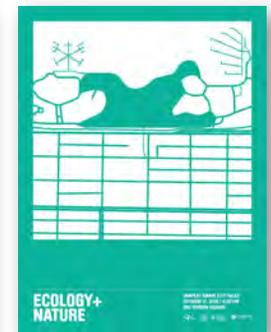
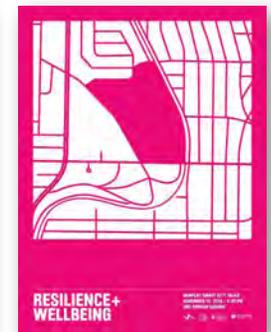
## Phase 2 – Challenges and Opportunities

### VanPlay Smart City Talks

Between September and November 2017, a series of public VanPlay Smart City Talks were held in partnership with Urbanarium, UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture and the Vancouver Park Board. The series of five talks brought together 20 prominent thinkers from the field, both renowned experts and local leaders. The 600+ attendees were from both the industry and the community and the speakers represented many varied points of view, which allowed for a robust discussion that opened the door to new and different ideas beyond the “usual suspects.”

### Community Dialogue & Community Centre Association Workshop – Challenges and Opportunities for the Downtown Urban Core

The Park Board Commissioners and staff hosted a Community Dialogue and a Community Centre Association workshop to explore the key challenges and opportunities for the parks and recreation system. In response to the challenges and opportunities, participants were asked to identify some “big move strategies” to take on over the next 25 years. While the focus was on the Downtown urban core, the issues raised highlight city-wide issues as well.



### VanPlay Smart City Talks

# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

## Phase 3 – Goals for the Futures and Roles and Responsibilities

### *VanPlay Deep Dives*

The Vancouver Parks and Recreation system is not just the work of the Vancouver Park Board. The many, varied and wonderful system is a result of thousands of organisations and groups working together in an “ecology” of sorts. As an important part of understanding the current state of the system, we are looking to better understand the ecology within which healthy, active neighbourhoods are created.

Consequently, this will help us better understand where the Park Board’s core responsibilities lie and allow us to better support our partners in providing services to the community.

Throughout February and March, our partners and stakeholders (teams, committees, organisations and agencies) were invited to host a VanPlay Deep Dive, an independently run, small group workshop. The goal of the “VanPlay Deep Dive” is to map out the many contributors to Vancouver’s parks and recreation system and outline where we want to go in the future and what we need to get there.

346 members of key stakeholder groups completed 64 Deep Dive workbooks. Park Board staff hosted a handful of unique Deep Dives including three focused on sport and wellness and one for youth that was attended by over 110 adolescents and youth workers.

### *Urban Explorers Parks and Public Spaces Showcase*

Over 6 months, three groups of Vancouver elementary school students explored the City of Vancouver and looked at various environmental and social challenges in their community.

The students present their findings and recommendations in a park and public spaces showcase. The presentation featured science-fair-style dioramas, short essays and photo walks addressing issues ranging from climb-ability, public art and comfortable spaces, to homelessness. Their projects highlighted ideas on how to make Vancouver's parks and public spaces better for young people.

This initiative was presented by the Society of Children and Youth of BC with the support of Translink, the Board of Parks and Recreation's VanPlay and the City of Vancouver's Places for People Downtown.



Hashtagged Social Media Posts | Instagram

## Phase 4 – Testing the Goals

As a result of over a year of public, partner, staff and stakeholder input and preliminary research into best practices and precedents from around the world, the VanPlay team drafted a set of 10 goals statements. Phase 4 tested these goals with the community and sought out any missing pieces.

Throughout May and June 2018, the goals were available for review and feedback via two online surveys, one for the community and one directed at Park Board staff and through a Community Dialogue event hosted by Park Board Commissioners.

The goal statements were refined as a result of the feedback and are published in “10 Goals to Shape the Next 25 Years”.



## Phase 5 – Level of Service, Big Moves and Operationalisation of the Big Ideas

To come in late 2018 and early 2019, Phase 5 will include a series of workshops and an online survey to define metrics for success, write targets for parks and recreation amenity provision and the implementation plan. The results of these efforts will support development of “Strategic Big Moves” (2019) and the “Playbook” implementation plan (2019).

*Top to Bottom:*

VanPlay Tour Van | Katherine Howard

Park Board Commissioners and Staff at VanPlay  
Imagination Playground | Katherine Howard





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